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**Hans of Iceland** ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

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# HANS OF ICELAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE MORTUARY AND ITS VISITORS.

"Ah! Neighbor Niels; look where love leads to. Poor Guth Stersen would not be lying there, on that black slab, like a star-fish forgotten by the tide, if she had thought of nothing else but her father's boat and mending his nets. May Saint Usuph, the fisherman, console our comrade in this trying affliction."

"And what about her betrothed?" was the sharp rejoinder, given in quivering accents; "Gill Stadt, that handsome young fellow, now stretched out by her side? He would have been alive now, had he not fallen in love with Guth, and in consequence gone to seek his fortune in the Rœraas mines. He should have remained at home, quietly rocking his young brother's cradle, hanging from the smoky rafters of his mother's cottage."

"Your memory gets weaker with age, Mother Olly," interrupted Neighbor Niels. "Gill never had a brother; that deepens poor Widow Stadt's grief, for her cottage is now desolate; and if to console herself she casts her eyes upward, she finds between heaven and them the roof of her cottage, with the empty cradle of her child still hanging there, the son who now lies dead in the height of his prime."

"Poor mother!" said Mother Olly; "as for the young man, he has only himself to blame. Why did he go to Rœraas, and become a miner?"

"I thoroughly believe," muttered Niels, "that in those

infernal mines a man's life is sacrificed for every ascalin of copper that they yield. What is your opinion, Neighbor Braall?"

"Miners are mad," replied the fisherman. "A fish cannot live out of water; a man should not dive into the bowels of the earth."

"But," objected a young man in the crowd, "if to secure his betrothed, it were necessary for Gill Stadt to work in the mines?"

"We ought never to expose our lives," interrupted Olly, "for the sake of matters of far less importance. A fine dowry Gill has gained for his Guth!"

"Did this young girl drown herself in despair, on hearing of her lover's death?" inquired another.

"Who says so?" exclaimed a soldier, roughly, who was passing his way through the crowd. "I knew the girl well; and she was certainly engaged to a young miner, who was crushed to death by the fall of a rock, in one of the subterranean galleries of Storwaadsgrute, near Roeraas. She was also the mistress of one of my comrades; and the day before yesterday she was venturing secretly to Munckholm, to celebrate with her lover the death of her betrothed, when her boat struck on a rock, and she was drowned."

A confused hubbub of voices arose, in the midst of which the old woman exclaimed:

"Impossible! brave sir."

The young ones remained silent. Neighbor Niels maliciously recalled the fisherman's remark:

"That is where love leads to."

The soldier was getting seriously angry at the old women's incredulity. He had already called them "a parcel of old witches from the Cave of Quiragoth," and they were not disposed to endure so gross an insult, when a sharp and commanding voice put an end to the debate, exclaiming:

"Silence! silence, you old dotards!" All became silent; as the cock's crowing causes the hens to cease their clucking. Before picturing the remainder of the scene, it would perhaps be as well to give some idea of the place in which it occurred.

It was, as the reader no doubt already guesses, one of those dreadful buildings which public pity and social forethought have erected for the reception of unknown corpses, the last asylum of the dead who have for the most part lived an unhappy life, and to which crowd

those persons who are moved by simple curiosity, as well as others filled with morbid or kindly feelings. Often the friends or weeping relations of the deceased come to see their worst fears realized, after a period of long suspense.

In times long past, in the only partially civilized country to which I have transported my readers, it had not entered into the minds of the authorities, as it has to those model cities of mud and gold, to make these places a receptacle for monuments, ingeniously ghostly and elegantly funereal.

The light did not fall through a tomb-shaped window of an artistically sculptured vault, upon sorts of couches on which the comforts of the living seem to have been accorded to the dead, and where the very pillow appears to court but slumber.

If the guardian's door were left open, the eye, wearied with the sight of nude and hideous corpses, could not then, as it does now, repose itself by the sight of smiling children and elegant furniture. Death was here in all its hideousness—in all its horror. As yet they had never ventured to deck the fleshless skeleton with bows and ribbons.

The hall in which the late conversation took place was vast, and so gloomy that it had the appearance of even being of greater extent. The only light came through a low square entrance door, and from a gap roughly pierced in the ceiling, through which a feeble and dull light fell, together with the rain, hail, or snow, according to the season of the year, on the corpses stretched directly under it. An iron balustrade ran across the hall, dividing it into two parts. The outer one toward the square door was for public admittance; in the inner were two long black granite slabs, placed flat down and arranged parallel to each other.

In each division there was a side door, which served as entrances for the guardian and his assistants, whose quarters were situated in the rear of the building, which ran back toward the sea.

The miner and his betrothed occupied two of these granite beds. The large blue and purple spots plainly denoted that decomposition had already commenced in the young girl's body.

Gill's features were harsh and rigid; his body was so terribly mutilated, that it was impossible to judge if he had been as handsome as Dame Olly had asserted.

It was before these disfigured remains that the conver-

sation we have just related took place. An old man, tall and thin, with folded arms and head bowed down, was seated on a broken stool in one of the darkest corners of the hall. He seemed to pay but slight attention to what was going on around him, until the moment when he arose, suddenly exclaiming: "Silence, dotards, silence!" and seized the soldier's arm. All then became silent. The soldier turned round, and burst into a rude shout of laughter at the sight of the person who had interrupted him so strangely, whose pale face, scanty hair, and long fingers, together with his complete suit of reindeer leather, fully justified so mirthful a greeting. A murmur rose from the crowd of women, who had remained silent a while.

"It is the guardian of the Spladgest" (dead-house at Drontheim). "The accursed porter of the dead. The diabolical Spiagudry. The wicked sorcerer."

"Peace, you dotards, peace! If to-day is your devil's Sabbath, hasten for your broomsticks, or they will fly off alone, and leave in peace this valiant descendant of the god Thor."

Then Spiagudry, trying to twist his countenance into a gracious smile, addressed the soldier.

"You were saying, my brave fellow, that this wretched woman——"

"The old scoundrel!" muttered Olly; "we are wretched women, as far as he is concerned; when we have the misfortune to fall into his clutches, his fee is only thirty ascalins, while the miserable carcass of a man brings him in forty."

"Silence, hags!" said Spiagudry. "In truth, these daughters of Satan are like their own kettles; when they boil, they must sing. Tell me, my king of the swords, will your comrade be likely to kill himself in despair at the loss of Guth, his mistress?"

Here the long-repressed explosion burst forth.

"Listen to the miscreant, the old heathen!" cried simultaneously twenty sharp and discordant voices. "He is on the lookout for another dead body, for the sake of the forty ascalins."

"Well, if so, what then?" retorted the guardian of Spladgest. "Does not our gracious king, Christian V., whom may Saint Hospice protect, does he not declare himself the born guardian of all miners in the kingdom, so that he may enrich himself with the miserable pittance they may possess at their death?"



"You do great honor to his majesty," said Braall, the fisherman, "to compare the royal treasury to the strong-box of your charnel-house, and yourself to him, Neighbor Spiagudry."

"Neighbor, indeed!" sneered the guardian, disgusted at the familiarity. "Your neighbor, say rather, your host; some day, my dear citizen of the sea, I'll offer you one of my six stone beds for a week. Besides," he continued, "I alluded to the death of this soldier simply to know if suicide, committed on account of the passions inspired by these ladies, was to become a regular custom."

"Well, you guardian of corpses, much like one yourself, what is the meaning of that amiable expression of countenance, more like a smile on the face of a dying man?"

"Splendid, my gallant sir," replied Spiagudry. "I have always thought there was more wit under the helmet of the soldier Thurn, who defeated Satan both with saber and tongue, than under Bishop Isleef's mitre, he who wrote the "History of Iceland," or under the college cap of Professor Schœnning, who has so well described our cathedral."

"In that case, take my advice, old leather-coat, forsake your charnel-house, with all its profits, and betake yourself to the Viceroy of Berghen's Museum. I swear to you by Saint Belphegor, that they give their weight in gold for curious beasts. Now tell me, what do you want with me?"

"When bodies are fished out of water and brought to us, we have to give half our fee to the fisherman. I therefore wished, noble heir of Soldier Thurn, to ask you to urge upon your unhappy comrade not to drown himself, but to choose some other form of death; it can little matter to him, and I am sure that he would not wish to wrong the poor Christian, who is hospitable enough to receive his body, if Guth's loss should drive him to such an act of destruction."

"You deceive yourself, most charitable and hospitable guardian of the dead; my comrade will not have the satisfaction of being received into your charming retreat, with its six beds. Don't you think he has already consoled himself with another? Why, he was tired of Guth a long time ago."

At these words the storm, which Spiagudry had for a while drawn upon himself, burst with redoubled violence upon the soldier's head.

"So, you scoundrel!" shrieked the old women, "it is

thus we are forgotten; a pretty thing indeed it is, to love such villains!"

The young women still maintained silence; some of them even thought that the devil-may-care soldier had a fair share of good looks.

"Ho, ho!" returned the soldier, "is the witches' Sabbath commencing again? Beelzebub's punishment must be terrible, to be condemned to listen to such choruses once a week."

It is hard to conceive how this retort would have been received, had not the attention of all been attracted by a noise from without. A band of naked urchins were seen howling and jumping round a curtained litter, which two men bore through the mortuary door.

"Where did you come from?" asked the guardian of the bearers.

"From Urchtal Sands."

"Oglypiglap!" cried Spiagudry.

One of the side doors opened, and a little man of the race of Lapps, entirely dressed in leather, came forward, and made a sign to the bearers of the litter to follow him.

Spiagudry accompanied them, and the door was closed before the curious crowd had been able to guess, by the length of the body, whether it was that of a male or female. They were still lost in conjectures when Spiagudry and his assistant reappeared, carrying the corpse of a man, which they placed upon one of the granite slabs.

"It is a long time since such fine clothes have passed through my hands," said Oglypiglap, as, standing on tip-toe, he hung upon the wall above the dead man the elegant uniform of a captain of musketeers.

The head of the body was terribly disfigured, and the limbs were covered with blood, which Spiagudry washed off by dashing streams from a broken bucket.

"By Saint Beelzebub!" exclaimed the soldier, "it is an officer of my regiment. Who can it be? Let me see, can it be Captain Bollar, who has killed himself from grief at the loss of his uncle?—Bah! why, he is his heir!—or Baron Randmer, whom yesterday a cast of the dice deprived of his estate, and who to-morrow may win his opponent's property? No, it cannot be he. Is it Captain Lory, whose dog was drowned; or Paymaster Stuuk, whose wife has been much talked about? Really, I don't see why he should blow out his brains for that."

The crowd increased every moment. Just then a young man was riding along the quay, and seeing the crowd

assembled, dismounted, and throwing the reins to his groom, entered the Spladgest.

He wore a plain traveling costume, armed with a saber, and he was enveloped in a large green cloak. A plume of black feathers, fastened to his hat by a diamond buckle, hung over his handsome features, and mingled with his long chestnut curls, while his boots and spurs, thickly covered with mud, showed that he had come from a long distance.

A little thick-set man, also wrapped in a cloak, and whose hands were covered in enormous gloves, was then remarking to the soldier :

"Who tells you that he has committed suicide? That man as much killed himself as the roof of your cathedral set itself on fire."

As a double-edged weapon inflicts two wounds, so this speech produced two replies.

"Our cathedral," said Niels, "is now being entirely roofed with copper. They say it was that villain, Han, who set it on fire, to give the miners work, among whom was his favorite, Gill Stadt, now lying there."

"The devil!" cried the soldier in his turn. "Do you mean to tell me, the second musketeer of the Munckholm regiment, that that man has not blown out his brains?"

"The man has been murdered," replied the little man, coldly.

"Listen to the oracle. Why, your eyes are no clearer than your hands, that you cover with those great gloves of yours in the height of summer."

An angry glance shot from the little man's eyes as he retorted :

"Soldier, implore your patron saint to protect your face one day from these hands."

"Come out and try, then," cried the soldier, boiling over with rage. Checking himself, he quickly added :

"But this is not the time or place to speak of duels ; we are in the presence of the dead."

The little man muttered some words in an unknown tongue, and disappeared among the crowd.

"The body was found on Urechtal Sands," exclaimed another.

"On Urechtal Sands," repeated the soldier. "Captain Dispolsen was to land there on his return from Copenhagen."

"Captain Dispolsen has not yet arrived at Munckholm," said a voice.

"They say that Han of Iceland haunts that coast," remarked another.

"In that case," said the soldier, "this may be the captain's body. If Han is the murderer, he kills his victims in so diabolical a manner, that they are frequently supposed to have made away with themselves."

"What kind of a man is Han?"

"He is a giant," answered one.

"No, a dwarf," contended another.

"Has nobody ever seen him?" cried a third.

"Those who see him for the first time may reckon it their last."

"Silence!" cried Mother Olly. "There are, they say, only three persons who have ever exchanged a word with him—that reprobate, Spiagudry, Widow Stadt, and—but he had a miserable life and a fearful death—that poor Gill there. So, silence."

"Silence!" repeated all.

"Now I am sure," exclaimed the soldier, suddenly, "that this is Captain Dispolsen. I recognize the steel chain that our prisoner, old Schumacker, gave him on his departure."

The young man with the black plume abruptly broke the silence.

"You are sure that it is Captain Dispolsen?"

"Certain, by all that is good in Saint Beelzebub," was the reply.

The young man left at once.

"Call a boat," said he to his servant. "I must go to Munckholm."

"But, my lord, the general."

"Take back the horses to him, and I will be there to-morrow. Am I my own master or not? Quick! daylight is closing; I am in a hurry. Now for a boat."

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## CHAPTER II.

### MUNCKHOLM FORTRESS.

The reader is already aware that the scene lately drawn took place at Drontheim, one of the four principal cities of Norway, although it was not a vice-regal residence.

At this period, 1699, the kingdom of Norway was still united to that of Denmark, and was governed by a viceroy, who resided at Berghen, a city situated further south,

and much larger and more beautiful than Drontheim, notwithstanding Admiral Tromp's appellation.

Drontheim looks picturesque when approached from the gulf which derives its name from the city. The harbor is not small, though vessels cannot enter at all times with ease, and has somewhat the appearance of a large canal. The Swedish and Danish ships anchor to the right, and foreign vessels to the left, according to the regulations laid down by port rules.

The city is situated in the midst of a well cultivated plain, dominated by the slender turrets of the cathedral. This church, one of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture, as we may learn from the work of Professor Schoenning—so learnedly quoted by Spragudry—who described it before it had been destroyed by repeated fires. The edifice bore upon its principal spire the episcopal cross, the distinctive sign that it was in the see of the Lutheran Bishop of Drontheim. Far beyond the city, above the blue horizon, could be seen the white and delicate peaks of the Kole mountains, looking like the sharp ornaments of an ancient crown.

In the midst of the harbor, about a cannon-shot from the shore, rose the fortress of Munckholm, built upon a mass of wave-beaten rocks—a gloomy prison, inclosing within its walls a captive celebrated for his long career of prosperity and his rapid downfall.

Schumacker, of obscure parentage, had been loaded with favors by his royal master; then hurled from the position of Grand Chancellor of Norway and Denmark to the criminal bar, and condemned to the scaffold, but received a reprieve at the last moment. He was then cast into a dungeon in the castle at the further extremity of the two kingdoms. His own favorites had been the means of his downfall, nor could he complain of their ingratitude, for he had only raised them to high positions that he might use them as stepping-stones to attain a still loftier one himself.

He, who had created the nobility of Denmark, could perceive from his place of exile those he had raised, sharing his rank and honors. Count d'Ahlefeld, his avowed enemy, had succeeded him as grand chancellor. General Arensdorf, as grand marshal, had all the military patronage in his hands, while Bishop Spollyson was inspector of the universities. His only enemy who did not owe his advancement to him was Count Ulric Frederic



Guldenlew, Viceroy of Norway, a natural son of Frederic III., by far the most noble disposition of all.

It was toward the Munckholm rocks that his boat, in which the young man with the black plumes had embarked, was slowly advancing. The sun was rapidly sinking behind the solitary castle; the heavy mass intercepted its now horizontal rays, so much so that the peasant on the far-off hills of Larsynn could perceive the shadow of the sentinel on duty at the turrets of Munckholm cast upon the heather about him.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DANDY'S CONFESSIONS.

"Andrew, order the curfew to be tolled in half an hour. Let Sorsyll relieve Duckness at the main portcullis, and let Maldivius mount guard at the big tower. Keep strict watch on the turrets of the Lion of Sleswig. At seven o'clock do not forget to have the gun fired, as a signal for the chain to be drawn across the harbor. Stay!—we must wait for Captain Dispolsen. It will therefore be necessary to light the beacon, and to see if that of Walderhog is also illuminated according to yesterday's orders. Let refreshments be in readiness for the captain's arrival, and—I was almost forgetting—mark down Toric Belfast, the second musketeer of the Munckholm regiment, for two days in the cells. He has been absent all day."

These orders were issued by a sergeant of the Munckholm regiment, as he stood under the dark and smoky archway of the guard-house, which was situated in the low tower that protected the principal entrance to the castle.

The soldiers to whom he addressed these orders rose at once to carry them out.

At that moment the measured stroke of oars was heard from without.

"That is no doubt Captain Dispolsen," observed the sergeant, as he stood watching at the small grated window looking on to the gulf.

"Who comes there?" cried the sergeant, as a boat was rowed alongside the iron door.

"Open," was the reply, and, giving the password, "Peace and Safety."

"No one enters here without an order of admittance. Have you yours?"

"Yes."

"I will soon prove the truth of that, and if you lie, by my patron saint, I will give you a taste of the gulf water."

Closing the window, he remarked to those around :

"That is not the captain."

The light gleamed on the rusty bolts as they creaked in the sockets; the bars were withdrawn, the door slowly rolled on its hinges, and the sergeant now scrutinized the parchment presented to him by the new-comer.

"Pass," said he; "it is all right. Wait a minute; take off that buckle on you hat; no one is allowed to enter the prison with any jewelry, except the king and his relatives, the viceroy and his family, the bishop, and the officers of the garrison. You do not come under any of these heads."

The young man made no reply, but unfastening the forbidden jewel, he tossed it as payment to the fisherman who had rowed him across. The latter, on seeing the value of the gift, fearing the donor might repent of his generosity, quickly took to his oars, so as to place the greatest possible distance between the benefactor and the favor.

While the sergeant securely refastened the door, murmuring at the lavish way the orders of admittance were given, the young man, throwing his cloak over his shoulders, passed through the dark arch of the guard-house, across the wide parade, through the artillery quarters, where some old dismounted culverins, still to be seen at the Copenhagen Museum, were lying, until he reached the main portcullis, which was raised after his permit had been examined.

Then, followed by a soldier, he crossed, without hesitation, as one well acquainted with the place, one of the four squares surrounding the great circular court, in the center of which is the vast rock upon which stands the tower called the Lion of Sleswig, deriving its name from having been the place of imprisonment chosen by Rolf the Dwarf for his brother Joatham the Lion, Duke of Sleswig.

It is not our intention here to give a full account of Munckholm Tower, the more so because, were the reader confined in a state prison, he doubts whether he should ever escape by the garden. He would be wrong there, for the Lion of Sleswig Tower, devoted to prisoners of the

highest distinction, included among other privileges that of walking in a garden, somewhat of a wilderness, where holly bushes, old yew-trees, and a few pines grew in the crevices of the rocks surrounding the prison, which was protected further by lofty walls and massive towers.

When the young man arrived at the foot of this rock, he ascended some steps roughly cut in the stone, until he reached the foot of one of the numerous towers in the inclosure, in which was placed a postern gate. He then sounded a brass horn which had been given to him by the sentry at the portcullis.

"Open the door quickly!" cried a voice gayly. "I expect it is this infernal captain."

As the door swung back, the new-comer saw, in a feebly lighted Gothic hall, a young officer lounging upon a heap of mantles and reindeer skins, having near him a lamp with three burners—one of those our forefathers used to hang from the ceiling, but which was now placed on the ground.

The elegance of his uniform, and the foppishness of his dress, contrasted with the nakedness of the hall and clumsy make of the scanty furniture. He was reading, but turned half-round to greet his visitor.

"It is the captain. Welcome, captain! You little thought you were keeping a man waiting whom you have never seen. Never mind; we shall soon make acquaintance—what say you? Let me begin, then, by condoling with you on your return to this ancient castle. If I remain here much longer, I shall become as gay as an owl nailed to a door as a kind of scarecrow. When I return to Copenhagen for my sister's nuptials. I do not believe four women in a hundred will recognize me. Now tell me: are knots of rose-colored ribbon fastened to the bottom of breeches still the fashion? Have any more translations been done of that French lady's novels—*Mademoiselle de Scudery*? I go by her "*Clelie*." I suppose it is still read at Copenhagen. It is my handbook of love, now that I can but sigh at being so far removed from all attractive eyes; for, beautiful as our young prisoner's eyes are—you understand to whom I allude—they mean nothing as far as I am concerned. Ah! if it were not for my father's orders; now, captain, I will tell you in confidence—don't mention it again—that my father has urged me to—you understand—Schumacker's daughter, in fact; but I am only wasting time, for that pretty statue has



nothing of the woman about her. She is always crying, and never even glances at me."

The young man, who had not been able to get in a word edgewise, now exclaimed, in great surprise :

"What are you saying—you have been urged to beguile that unfortunate Schumacker's daughter?"

"Beguile? well, yes, that is the term used in Copenhagen; but I defy Satan himself to succeed here. When I was on duty the day before yesterday, hoping to please her, I wore the new ruff which has just arrived from Paris. Would you believe it? she never even raised her eyes, although I passed three or four times across her room, clanking my new spurs. Why, the rowels are larger than a Lombardy ducat—the latest fashion, I believe, is it not?"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the young man, excitedly, striking his forehead, "this is too awful."

"Is it not?" replied the officer, misapprehending the exclamation. "Fancy not paying the slightest attention to me—hardly credible, but true, for all that."

The young man paced up and down, violently agitated.

"Will you take some refreshment, Captain Dispolsen?" asked the officer.

The young man, quickly recovering himself, replied :

"I am not Captain Dispolsen."

"What!" exclaimed the officer, severely, rising from his couch. "Who are you, then, that has dared to intrude, and at such an hour?"

The new-comer produced his order.

"I wish to see Count Griffenfeld—I mean your prisoner."

"The count! the count!" muttered the officer, with an air of suspicion. "But, after all, this order is quite in form. This is certainly Vice-Chancellor Grummond de Knud's signature. 'The bearer can visit the State prisons within the royal dominions at any season or hour.' Grummond de Knud is old General Sevin de Knud's brother, who is the one in command at Drontheim. He has had my future brother-in-law's education entrusted to him."

"Thanks for your family details, lieutenant; but do you not think you have dwelt enough upon them?"

"This piece of impertinence is right," muttered the lieutenant, biting his lips. Then he exclaimed: "Usher, usher, conduct this stranger to Schumacker, and do not grumble if I have unhooked your lamp, with its three

burners and one wick. I am glad of the chance of examining an article which doubtless dates back to the time of Sciold the Pagan, or of Havar the Cloven. Crystal lusters are all the fashion now."

While the young man and his guide passed across the deserted garden of the tower, this martyr to fashion again followed the thread of the amorous adventures of Clelie the Amazon and Horatius with the One Eye.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MASTER AND MAN

A mounted groom, leading a second horse, entered the court-yard of the palace belonging to the Governor of Drontheim. The man dismounted, and was on the point of starting for the stables, when he was roughly seized by the arm, while a voice exclaimed :

"How now, Poel? You here alone? What about your master? Where is your master?"

The remark came from old General Sevin de Knud, who from his window had seen the groom enter, leading the riderless horse, and had hastened down to question the man, with a look of great anxiety on his face.

"Your excellency," replied Poel, bowing profoundly, "my master has left Drontheim."

"What! he was here, then, and left without seeing his general—without one embrace for his old friend. When did he leave?"

"He arrived this evening, and left soon after."

"This evening! this evening! Where did he stop, and where has he gone?"

"He dismounted at the Spladgest, and embarked for Munckholm."

"Ah! and I thought he was at the antipodes. But what took him to the castle? What was he doing at the Spladgest? There is a knight-errant indeed. Yet, after all, it is my fault. I brought him up in that way, wishing him to act with perfect freedom in spite of his rank."

"Nor is he in any way a slave to etiquette," answered Poel.

"No; but he is to his own caprices. Doubtless he will soon return. Go, Poel, and take some refreshment. Tell me, have you been wandering from pillar to post?" the general anxiously inquired.

"General, we came straight from Berghen. My master seemed sad."

"Sad. What took place between him and his father? Does the marriage proposed displease him?"

"I do not know. Report says that his serene highness insists on it."

"Insists on it. Then there must have been opposition. Ordener must have refused to comply with the viceroy's wishes."

"I am ignorant of what has taken place, your excellency; but he seemed sad."

"Sad. Do you know how his father received him?"

"The first time was in the camp at Berghen. His serene highness remarked, 'I do not often see you, my son.' 'As you notice it, my lord and father, it is the more gratifying,' answered my master. He then gave an account of his travels in the North, and his serene highness said, 'Well done.' The next day, on his return from the palace, my master said, 'They wish to marry me; but I must see my second father, General Sevin de Knud.' I saddled the horses, and we came here."

"Did he really, Poel," asked the old general, with a tremor in his voice, "call me his second father?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"May bad luck follow me if I forward a marriage against his inclinations. I would sooner be in disgrace with my royal master than lend myself to it. But, however, she is the daughter of the grand chancellor of the two kingdoms. By the by, Poel, does Ordener know that his future mother-in-law, the Countess d'Ahlefeld, has been here incognito since yesterday, and that the count is expected?"

"I do not know, general."

"Oh! he must know it," muttered the old governor, "or why did he beat a retreat directly he arrived?"

The general, kindly waving his hand to Poel, and saluting the sentinel, who stood with presented arms, retired into the palace with his mind as ill at ease as when he left it.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE BITTERNESS OF CAPTIVITY.

When the stranger had ascended the many spiral staircases, and passed through several lofty rooms within the

tower called the Lion of Sleswig, he was ushered into the presence of the one he sought, and the first words which greeted the young man's ears were :

"Is it Captain Dispolsen?"

This question came from an aged man, who was seated with his back to the door, resting his elbows on the table, and with his face buried in his hands. He was wrapped in a black woollen robe. Over a bed at the other end of the room a battered shield was placed, around which were broken collars of the orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog. Below the shield a count's coronet reversed was fixed, while two fragments of hands of justice, bound in the form of a cross, completed these extraordinary ornaments.

The old man was Schumacker.

"No, sir," the usher replied, in answer to his question. Then, turning to the stranger, he added, "This is the prisoner," and left them together, closing the door without hearing the old man's querulous exclamation :

"If it is not the captain, I do not wish to see him."

The stranger remained standing near the door, while the prisoner, thinking himself alone—for he had not altered his position—relapsed once more into silence.

All at once he burst forth :

"The captain has certainly abandoned or betrayed me. Oh, men—men are like the icicle which the Arab took for a diamond, and stored away in his pouch. When he sought for it, nothing remained but a drop of water."

"I am not one of those men," said the stranger.

Schumacker hastily rose up.

"Who is here? who is listening? Is it some wretched tool of Guldenlew's?"

"Do not speak ill of the viceroy, my lord count."

"My lord count! Do you wish to flatter me, that you call me by this title. You are only losing time, for I am no longer in power."

"He who now speaks to you, did not know you in your days of power; but he is no less your friend."

"He then believes I am still capable of serving him. Those who remember the unfortunate, do so with the hope that some use may be made of them."

"It is I who ought to complain, noble count, for I have recollected you, while you have forgotten me. I am Ordener."

A flash of pleasure beamed for a moment in the old

man's eyes, and a smile lit up his face like the sun's rays piercing through a cloud.

"Ordener, you are welcome. Ordener the explorer, a thousand good wishes to the traveler who remembers the prisoner."

"But you had then forgotten me?"

"I had forgotten you," returned Schumacker, relapsing into the same gloomy expression of countenance, "as one forgets the passing breeze, with its refreshing coolness. Happy for us when it does not change into a hurricane, and overthrow us."

"Count de Griffenfeld, you did not then believe in my return?"

"The old Schumacker had lost all count of it; but there is a young girl here, who only yesterday remarked that on the eighth of May you had been gone a year."

Ordener trembled with joy.

"What! great heavens! was that your Ethel, noble count?"

"Who else could it have been?"

"Your daughter then, my lord, has deigned to count the months of my absence. Oh! how many weary days I have passed! I have traveled through Norway, from Christiana Wardhus; but in the distance, Drontheim was always in my thoughts."

"Make use of your liberty, young man, as long as you can. But tell me now who you are, Ordener. I wish to know you by another name. The son of my most deadly enemy is called Ordener."

"Perhaps, my lord count, this deadly enemy has kindlier feelings toward you than you entertain toward him."

"You evade my question; but keep your secret. I shall perhaps find in the fruit which seems only to refresh, a poison lurking that will kill me."

"Count!" cried Ordener irritably. "Count!" he added, in tones of reproach and pity.

"How can I trust you?" answered Schumacker, "when you always defend the implacable Guldenlew?"

"The viceroy," answered the young man, gravely, "has given orders that you shall be free to wander throughout the interior of the tower of the Lion of Sleswig. I heard this piece of news at Berghen, and you will doubtless soon receive notice of the fact."

"This is a favor beyond my hopes; but I only expressed my wish to you. As years advance, they diminish the

weight of my fetters; and when I am bowed down with infirmities, they will say, 'You are free.'"

The old man smiled bitterly, and then continued:

"And you, young man, are you still imbued with those foolish ideas of independence?"

"If I had abandoned these foolish ideas, I should not be here."

"How did you reach Drontheim?"

"On horseback."

"How did you come to Munckholm?"

"In a boat."

"Poor silly man, who considers himself a free agent, when he uses a horse, and then a boat. It is not your limbs that execute your will—it is an animal; it is a material object, and you call that free will."

"I compel others to obey me."

"To force some to obey you is to give the right to others to command you. True independence is only to be found in isolation."

"You are not a lover of mankind, count."

The old man gave a sad smile.

"I grieve because I am a man, and I can but laugh at him who would console me. If you are still ignorant of the fact, you will learn to know that misfortune engenders distrust, as prosperity fosters ingratitude. Listen to me. You have just come from Berghen. Can you tell me what favorable breeze has breathed on Captain Dispolsen? Something fortunate must have happened, since he has forgotten me."

Ordener looked both sorrowful and embarrassed.

"Dispolsen, my lord count—I came here to-day to speak about him. I know that he was entirely in your confidence."

"You know that," answered the prisoner, uneasily. "You deceive yourself. No one in the world has my confidence. Dispsolsen certainly holds important papers of mine. It is on my account that he has gone to Copenhagen to seek an audience with the king. I confess that I relied on him more than in another, for during the days of my prosperity, I never did him a service."

"Well, noble count, I saw him yesterday."

"Your emotion speaks for itself—he has betrayed me."

"He is dead."

"Dead?"

The prisoner crossed his arms and bowed his head; and then, looking fixedly at his visitor, he said:



"When I told you something fortunate had happened to him——"

Here he glanced toward the wall, on which the signs of his former grandeur were suspended, and he raised his hand as though to banish from his sight the witness of the grief he strove to master.

"It is not the man I pity; it is only one less. It is not myself—what have I to lose?—but my unfortunate daughter. I shall fall the victim of this infamous plot, and what will become of her when her father is taken away?"

He turned quickly to Ordener.

"How did he die? Have you seen him?"

"I saw him extended in the mortuary of Drontheim. No one knows whether he died from suicide or assassination."

"This is all important. If he has been murdered, I know whence the blow came; then all is lost. He was to bring me the proofs regarding the plot conspired against me. These proofs would have saved me and caused my enemies destruction. They have taken measures to destroy them. Ah! my unfortunate Ethel."

"My lord count," replied Ordener, "to-morrow I will tell you whether he has been murdered or not."

Schumacker, without replying, followed Ordener's retreating form with a look in which was pictured the calmness of despair, more terrible to witness than the calmness of death.

Ordener found himself in the prisoner's solitary antechamber, not knowing which way to turn. The evening had drawn in, and the room was in darkness. He opened the first door he came to, which led into a long corridor, lighted only by the moon's pale rays, faintly gleaming in the clouds. The obscure light struggled through the tall and narrow windows, casting reflections on the opposite walls, which appeared like a long procession of phantoms, coming and then vanishing in the gloom of the gallery.

The young man crossed himself, and wended his steps toward a red light which faintly gleamed at the extreme end of the passage. Through a half-opened door he saw a young girl kneeling at the foot of a simple altar in a gothic chapel, repeating in a low tone the litanies of the Virgin—a simple and sublime prayer, in which the soul pleads to the Mother of the Seven Sorrows to make intercession.

The girl was dressed in black crape and white gauze, thus giving at the first glance the idea that, up to this

moment, her days had been passed in sadness and innocence. Even in this attitude of supplication, her features showed that her nature was of no common order. Her eyes and her long dark hair were of the deepest black, a rare style of beauty in the north; her looks, cast heavenward, seemed fired by ecstasy rather than subdued by retirement. She might well have been mistaken for a virgin from the shores of Cyprus, or from the plains around the Tiber, who was covered with the fantastic vails of Ossian, and prostrate before the wooden cross and the stone altar of her Saviour.

Ordener so trembled with emotion that he could hardly stand, for he fully recognized the form now bent in prayer. The girl was praying for her father, for the mighty fallen, for the old deserted prisoner, repeating aloud the Psalm of Deliverance.

She prayed for another, but Ordener knew not for whom the supplication was offered, as the name did not escape her lips; only she repeated the song of the Sulamite, the wife who longs for the coming of her lord, and the return of the well-beloved.

Ordener retreated from the gallery. He respected the virgin in prayerful communication with God; yet his heart was filled with an unknown feeling of delight, utterly apart from religion.

The chapel door was gently closed, and a white figure holding a light came toward him. He stopped, mastered by feelings greater than he had ever experienced. He retreated toward the dark portion of the wall; his limbs refused to act, and he could plainly hear the beating of his own heart. As the young girl passed him, she heard the rustling of his coat, the quick and heavy breathing.

"Great heavens!" she cried.

Ordener rushed forward, supporting her with one hand, while he strove with the other to save the lamp, which was extinguished as it fell.

"It is I," he murmured, gently.

"Ordener!" exclaimed the girl, as the voice she had not heard for a year resounded in her ears.

A passing moonbeam lit up the joy of her countenance, as, timid and confused, she disengaged herself from the young man's arm.

"Is it the Lord Ordener?"

"Himself Countess Ethel."

"Why do you call me countess?"

"Why do you call me lord?"



The girl kept silence, and smiled ; the man kept silence, and sighed.

She was the first to speak.

"How is it you are here?"

"Forgive me if my presence annoys you. I came to see your father."

"Then," said Ethel, in a tone of pique, "you came only for my father's sake."

The young man simply looked down, keenly feeling the injustice of these words.

"You have doubtless been a long time at Drontheim—a very long time," continued Ethel, in a reproachful tone. "Your absence from the castle has not seemed long to you."

Ordener was deeply hurt, and made no reply.

"I quite approve of your conduct," said the fair prisoner, in a voice trembling with grief and rage ; "but I trust, Lord Ordener, you did not hear my prayers?"

"Countess, I did hear you."

"Ah ! Lord Ordener, it was hardly courteous to listen."

"I had no intention of doing so, noble countess," returned Ordener, faintly. "I certainly did hear you."

"I prayed for my father," said the girl, looking fixedly at him, as though courting an answer to these simple words.

Ordener remained silent.

"I also prayed," continued she, watching the effect her words would produce on him, "for one who bears your name—the viceroy's son, Count Guldenlew. We must include all in our prayers, even our persecutors."

The girl blushed at the evasion, done simply from pique, imagining the name had escaped her lips.

"Ordener Guldenlew is very unfortunate, noble lady, if you reckon him among your persecutors ; but he still has the happiness of being remembered in your intercessions."

"Oh, no !" cried Ethel, alarmed at the young man's cold manner. "No ; I was not praying for him. What am I saying ? what am I doing ? As for the viceroy's son, I detest him. I do not know him. Do not look at me so severely. Have I offended you ? If so, be lenient with a poor prisoner—you, whose time is passed in the company of some beautiful, high born lady, free and happy as yourself."

"I, countess ?"

Ethel burst into tears. and in a moment Ordener was at her feet.

"Did you not tell me," she said, smiling through her tears, that you had found the time of absence short?"

"Did I say so, countess?"

"Do not call me by that title," she gently replied. "I am countess to no one—more especially to you."

Ordener pressed her convulsively to his heart.

"Oh, my adored Ethel! Call me your Ordener; tell me," and he cast a burning glance at her tear-bedewed eyes—"tell me that you love me."

The young girl's answer was unheard, for Ordener, beside himself, took from her lips that kiss which, in the sight of Heaven, joins two hearts in the bonds of love.

Both remained silent, for it was one of those solemn moments, too short and rare, in which the soul experiences in some way the feelings of divine bliss.

The moments are indescribable when two spirits hold communion with each other; all worldly thoughts disappear, and immaterial existence unites them in a bond never to part on this earth, nor in the life to come.

Ethel had gently withdrawn from Ordener's embrace, as the moon softly shone, they gazed at each other with rapture, only Ordener's burning glances gleamed with all the boldness of a lion; while the half-veiled look upon the young girl's face bore the imprint of that angelic modesty which, in the virgin heart, mingles with delightful feelings of love.

"You were avoiding me, then, just now in the corridor, my Ordener?"

"I was not avoiding you; I felt like the blind man to whom sight has been suddenly restored, and who shades his eyes from the light of day."

"Your comparison rather applies to me; for, during your absence I had no other happiness than in my poor father's presence. I passed the weary days in consoling him, and," added she, lowering her eyes, "in hoping for your return. I read the legends of Edda to my father; and when he expressed his want of faith in all men I read portions of the Holy Evangelists, that he might not distrust the ways of Providence. I spoke of you to him; he was then silent—a proof that he likes you. Only when I vainly watched the roads leading to the city, or each vessel that entered harbor, he would shake his head with a bitter smile; then I wept. This prison, where my life has been passed, became odious to me; yet my father, who, until your arrival, had been the world to me, still

remained. You were no longer here, and I pined for the liberty which I had never known."

There was much purity and tenderness in the soft hesitation with which the girl gave vent to her feelings, giving to them an inexpressible charm beyond all human words to describe.

Orderer listened with the dreamy joy of one who had been removed from this world and its realities, to take part in the ideal pleasures of another state.

"And I," said he, "care not for the liberty in which you have no share."

"What, Orderer," exclaimed Ethel; "you will never leave me then again?"

This quickly recalled the young man to himself.

"My Ethel, I must depart to-night. I shall see you to-morrow; but I must then go again, until the time comes when I shall ever be by your side."

"Alas!" interrupted she; "absent once more——"

"I must repeat, my well-beloved Ethel, that I will soon return, either to snatch you from this prison, or to share it with you."

"Prisoner with him!" said she, softly. "Ah! do not deceive me. May I dare hope for so much happiness?"

"Tell me, Ethel, what vows shall I take? What would you have me do? Are you not my wife?"

Overcome with emotion, he clasped her tightly to his breast.

"I am thine," she feebly murmured. The two noble and pure of heart beat in perfect unison of feeling. They were suddenly startled by a shout of laughter, and a man, muffled in a long cloak, turned the light of a dark lantern upon the confused and frightened Ethel and the astonished and haughty-looking Orderer.

"Courage! my pretty couple, courage! but it seems to me that after so short a time in the land of tenderness, you have not followed all the windings of the rivulet of sentiment, and you must have taken a cut across country to have arrived at the village of kissing."

Our readers have doubtless recognized in the speaker the lieutenant who so greatly admired *Mademoiselle de Scudery's* works. Torn from his favorite "*Clelie*" by the belfry clock striking the midnight hour, totally unnoticed by the lovers, he had gone on his nightly round. In passing the eastern corridor, he overheard a few words, and had seen by the light of the moon two spectral-looking figures in the gallery. Being naturally curious and fear-

less, he darkened the lantern, and advanced on tiptoe toward the phantoms, so unpleasantly aroused from their ecstasy by his burst of laughter.

Ethel's first movement was to take flight; then instinctively she drew closer to Ordener for protection, and buried her burning face upon his breast.

The latter, looking boldly before him, said:

"Woe be to him who has dared to frighten and to wound thee, my Ethel."

"Yes, indeed," returned the lieutenant, "woe be to me if I have been clumsy enough to alarm the tender Mandana."

"My lord lieutenant," cried Ordener, haughtily, "I counsel you to be silent."

"My lord insolence," replied the officer, "I counsel you to be silent."

"Do you understand me?" exclaimed Ordener, in a voice of thunder. "Purchase our pardon by your silence."

"Tibi tua," responded the lieutenant; "buy my pardon by yours."

"Hold your peace!" cried Ordener, in a voice that made the windows rattle; and, placing the trembling girl in one of the old chairs, he shook the officer by the arm.

"Ho, peasant!" exclaimed the lieutenant, partly in anger, and half-laughing. "Do you not observe that the tunic you are crumpling so brutally is made of the choicest Abingdon velvet?"

Ordener looked him full in the eyes.

"Lieutenant, my patience is shorter than my sword."

"I understand you, my bold spark," returned the lieutenant, smiling ironically. "You are anxious I should do you the honor; but do you know who I am? No, thank you, 'Prince against prince, and shepherd against shepherd,' as the handsome Leander has it."

"If you will then have it," retorted Ordener, "Coward against coward. I shall then not have the distinguished honor of crossing swords with you."

"I might lose my temper, most noble shepherd, if you only wore a uniform."

"If I am not decked with the braid and the fringe, lieutenant, I carry the saber."

The haughty young man had thrown back his cloak, pressed his hat on his head, and grasped the hilt of his sword, when Ethel, aroused by his imminent danger, threw herself into his arms, and, clasping hers around him, she cried with terror and entreaty.

"You do wisely, beautiful lady, if you do not care to see this youngster punished for his insolence," said the lieutenant, who, at Ordener's threats, had calmly placed himself on guard. "Cyrus was on the point of quarrelling with Cambyzes; that is, if it is not conferring too great an honor to compare this vassal to Cambyzes."

"In the name of Heaven, Lord Ordener," cried Ethel, "do not let me feel I am the cause of witnessing such a misfortune."

Then raising her lovely eyes to his, she added :

"Ordener, I entreat you."

Ordener slowly sheathed his half-dawn sword, while the lieutenant exclaimed :

"By my faith, chevalier, although I know not who you are, I give you the title, as you appear to deserve it. You and I are acting up to the laws of gallantry, regardless of the ways of courtesy. The lady is right. The engagement, like the one I consider you worthy to have with me, should not take place in the presence of ladies—with all due deference to this charming dame—although they may have been the cause. Without infringing on etiquette, we can speak of the *duellum remotum* as the injured party. If you prefer to fix time, place, and arms, my fine Toledo rapier or my Merida dagger is ready to meet your chopping-blade sent out from Ashkreuth forge, or your hunting-knife, tempered in Lake Sparbo."

The "postponed duel," which the officer proposed, was the custom in the North, where it is said the practice of duelling first started. The bravest of men were in the habit of proposing and accepting the *duellum remotum*. This was arranged to take place months hence, or even years, and during that interval the adversaries were not to allude to the cause of offense either by word or deed.

If it were a love quarrel, the rivals refrained from visiting the lady, so that matters might remain at a standstill. This condition was left to the honor of the adversaries, as in days of tournaments, if the umpire considered that any of the laws of honor had been violated, he would cast his warder into the arena. The combatants immediately ceased the struggle; but until all was made clear, each conqueror's sword never moved an inch from the throat of the vanquished.

"Very well, chevalier," said Ordener, after a moment's reflection; "a messenger shall give you notice as to place."

"That will suit me," answered the lieutenant, for it



will give me time to be present at my sister's marriage. You must know that you will have the honor to meet the future brother-in-law of a noble lord, the viceroy's son, the Baron Ordener Guldenlew, who, on the occasion of his illustrious espousals, as Artamenes calls them, will be created Count of Danneskiold, colonel and knight of the Order of the Elephant. I, myself, who am the son of the grand chancellor of the two kingdoms, will doubtless be promoted to the rank of captain."

"That is all very well, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," returned Ordener, impatiently. "You are not yet captain, nor is the viceroy's son a colonel; but sabers are always sabers."

"And rustics are always rustics, however much you may try to elevate them to your level," muttered the officer, between his teeth.

"Chevalier," continued Ordener, "you know by the laws of honor you are forbidden to enter this tower, and have to keep silence regarding this affair."

"As for silence," answered the lieutenant, I shall be as mute as was Mutius Scævola when his hand was on the burning coals. As for entering the tower, I am not likely to do so, nor any of the garrison, for I have just received the order to leave Schumacker unguarded, and to inform him of the fact to-night. I should have done so, but I was trying on a pair of new boots from Cracovia. Between ourselves, I consider this to be a very imprudent order. Would you like to see my new boots?"

During this conversation, Ethel, seeing them both tempered down, and understanding nothing about the *duellum remotum*, now left them with the soft whisper of "To-morrow" in Ordener's ear.

"Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld, will you help me to leave the fort?"

"Willingly," replied the officer, "although it is rather late; or rather, somewhat early. How will you manage about a boat?"

"That will be quite right," said Ordener.

Conversing in a friendly manner, they passed through the garden, the circular court, the square yard, crossed the main portcullis, the parade, the artillery ground, without Ordener meeting the slightest obstacle, under the guidance of the patrolling officer. They at length reached the lower tower. The guard-room door was opened at the lieutenant's command.

"Till I see you again, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld?" said Ordener.

"Until we meet," answered the lieutenant. "You are a brave adversary, whoever you may be; and if your seconds can claim relation with you, I am sure they will not always confine themselves to that capacity."

They shook hands, the gate was closed, and the lieutenant, humming one of Lulli's newest airs, returned to his Polish boots and his French romances. Ordener, now left to himself, undressed, and wrapping his cloak well round his clothes, fastened it with his sword-belt upon his head, and then, putting into practice Schumacker's principles of independence, he plunged into the calm, cold waters of the gulf, and swam through the midst of the darkness to the opposite bank, toward the Spladgest—a point he was sure to compass either dead or alive. He was overpowered by the fatigues of the day, and he had great difficulty in reaching the shore. On arrival, he quickly dressed himself, and hastened to the mortuary—a black mass which stood forth on the quay, for the moon now had ceased to shine.

On approaching the building, he heard the sound of voices, and a faint light issued from an outlet in the roof. Astonished at this, he gave a loud knock at the door, when all was immediately hushed, and the light disappeared.

Again he knocked; the light flashed for an instant, permitting him to see a dark figure rush through the outlet in the roof and disappear.

Ordener struck the door for the third time, now using the hilt of his saber, exclaiming:

"Open, in the name of his majesty the king, and of his serene highness the viceroy."

The door slowly opened, and Ordener found himself face to face with the tall, pale, and emaciated Spiagudry, who, dressed all awry, with haggard eyes and blood-stained hands, carried a lamp, whose flashes quivered far less than did his huge and trembling form.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### GOLD IS OFTEN BOUGHT TOO DEARLY.

About an hour after, the young traveler wearing the black plume left the Spladgest. At nightfall the crowd dispersed. Oglypiglap then closed the outer door of the funereal edifice, while his master, Spiagudry, for the last

time, threw water over the bodies lying there. Both then retired to their comfortless room. Oglypiglap soon lay snoring on his trestle bed as unconscious as one of the corpses under his charge. Spiagudry, seated at a stone table covered with books, dried plants, and fleshless bones, was deep in his studies; though really innocent in themselves, they contributed, in a measure, to give him, among the people, the reputation of being a sorcerer and an evil genius, a charge which men of science had to risk at that period.

He had been engaged for several hours in his researches, and was about to leave books for bed, when his attention was directed to the following weird sentence in the works of Thormodus Torfœus:

"When a man lights his lamp, death will lie before him ere he can extinguish it."

"With all due deference to the learned doctor," he muttered, "this shall not be my case this evening."

Taking up the lamp, he was about to blow it out.

"Spiagudry!" cried a voice from the chamber of the dead.

The old guardian trembled in every limb. He did not believe, as many another so placed would have done, that the Spladgest guests had risen against him, for he was too deeply versed to have faith in imaginary fears. His terror was the more real as he recognized the sound of the voice.

"Spiagudry," repeated the voice angrily, "to make you hear me, must I needs tear your ears off?"

"May Saint Hospice have pity, not on my soul, but on my body," said the terrified old man, as he reluctantly moved toward the door leading to the chamber of the dead, and threw it open.

The lamp which he carried revealed a strangely hideous picture. On the one side was the spare, lank, half-bent Spiagudry; and on the other, a little man, short and thick-set, clothed from head to foot in skins of animals, stained with gore, was standing at the foot of Gill Stadt's corpse, which, with the bodies of the girl and the captain, formed the center of the scene—three silent witnesses, present at an interview which would have caused the living to have fled terrified away.

The little man's features, lit up by the light from the lamp, were most extraordinary. His beard was red and bushy; his hair, of the same bright hue, was mostly hidden by his elk-skin cap; his mouth was large, with very



thick lips; his teeth white, pointed, and separated; his nose curved like an eagle's beak; his grayish blue eyes never for a moment still, darted upon Spiagudry a look in which mingled the ferocity of the tiger with the cunning of the ape.

This strange looking being was armed with a long sword, a sheathless dagger, a stone-cutting ax, upon the long handle of which his hands rested, covered with large gloves made of blue-fox's skin.

"This old ghost has made me wait a long time," said he, speaking to himself, finishing with a roar like that of a wild beast.

Had it been possible for Spiagudry to have turned paler, he would now have done so from abject terror.

"Do you know that I come straight from Urchtal Sands?" said the little man, addressing himself directly to him. "By your keeping me waiting, have you any wish to change your straw bed for one of these stone couches?"

Spiagudry's trembling increased, and his two remaining teeth chattered with fear.

"Pardon me, master," said he, arching his huge body to be on a level with the little man; "I was fast asleep."

"Do you wish me to send you off into a far deeper sleep?"

Spiagudry's looks of terror were almost pleasanter to view than his attempt at a smile.

"Well, what is the matter with you?" continued the little man. "My presence does not seem to be very agreeable to you."

"Oh, my lord and master," replied the old guardian, "for me there can be no greater happiness than the sight of your excellency."

The effort which he made to give a smiling expression to his terrified countenance would have caused all but the dead to laugh.

"You old tailless fox, my excellency orders you to give up Gill Stadt's clothes to him."

As he pronounced the name, the little man's fierce and mocking expression of countenance became melancholy and overcast.

"Oh, master, pardon me, but I no longer have them," said Spiagudry. "Your grace is aware that we are compelled to give up all found on miners to a government official, as the king is their lawful heir."

The little man turned toward the corpse, and with crossed arms he muttered :

"He is right. These wretched miners are like the eider-duck. Its nest is fashioned only to be robbed of its down."

Raising the corpse in his arms, he strained it toward him with all his might, with savage growls in which both love and grief were mingled, similar to those of a bear caressing its cubs. These sounds were occasionally interrupted by words whose strange jargon Spiagudry did not understand. He at length left the body to rest on the slab, and, turning to the guardian, exclaimed :

"Do you know, you accursed sorcerer, the name of the soldier, born under an unlucky star, who had the misfortune to be preferred by this girl to Gill?" said he, kicking Guth Sterson's icy remains.

Spiagudry made a sign in the negative.

"Well, then, by the ax of Ingulphus, the chief of my race, I will exterminate all wearing that uniform, and he pointed to the officer's clothes. "The villain cannot in that way escape me. I will burn the whole forest in order to destroy the one venomous plant it contains. I swore to do it on the day of Gill's death. I have already given one body that ought to rejoice his corpse. Oh, Gill! there you are, without life or motion—you who could outstrip the seal or the chamois in its course; you who could master any of the Kole mountain bears. There you lie, motionless—you who could go from Bekel to Lake Smiasen in a day; you who could mount the peaks of Dovrefeld as a squirrel runs up an oak. There you are speechless, Gill—you, who, standing on the summit of the stormy Konigsberg, could roll your voice like thunder. Oh! Gill, it was all in vain that I destroyed the Faroe mines for your sake, that I set fire to Drontheim Cathedral. All my labor has been lost. The race of Iceland children will never be carried down by you as a descendant of Ingulphus the Exterminator. You will never inherit my stone ax; on the contrary, you have left me your skull, from which to drink the waters of the sea and the blood of men."

With these words, he seized the corpse by the head.

"Spiagudry," cried he, "help me."

Throwing off his gloves, he showed his huge hands, armed with long, strong nails, bent like those of a wild beast.

Spiagudry, who saw he was about to sever the corpse's

skull with his saber, could not suppress a cry of horror, exclaiming :

"Just heavens ! master, a dead man !"

"Well !" quietly replied the little man, "perhaps you would rather I should sharpen my blade on a live one."

"Oh ! permit me to entreat your excellency—how can your excellency profane——? Your grace—my lord—your serenity would not——"

"Are you soon going to finish, you living skeleton? Do you think that I want all these titles to convince me that you have a deep respect for my saber?"

"By Saint Waldemar ! by Saint Usuph ! in the name of Saint Hospice, spare the dead."

"Help me, and cease talking of saints to the devil."

"My lord," continued the suppliant Spiagudry, "by your illustrious ancestor, Saint Ingulphus——"

"Ingulphus the Exterminator was a reprobate like myself."

"In the name of Heaven," said the old man, falling on his knees, "I wish to spare you this reproach."

The little man now lost all patience ; his gray eyes flashed like burning coals.

"Help me !" he repeated, brandishing his saber.

These words were pronounced with the voice of a lion, had he the power of speech. The trembling guardian, half-dead with fright, sunk on to the black stone and held Gill's cold and clammy head in his hands, while the other, with the help of his dagger and saber, separated the skull with the greatest dexterity.

When this operation was over, he looked at the gory head for some time, using strange words ; then he handed the skull to Spiagudry to wash and scrape the flesh away.

"And I," he said, with a kind of howl, "shall not even have the consolation of knowing, when I am gone, that I leave an heir with the spirit of Ingulphus, to drink from my skull the blood of men or the waters of the sea."

For a time he was lost in gloomy thoughts.

"Hurricane follows hurricane, avalanche brings down avalanche, and I shall be the last of my race," he continued. "Why did not Gill hate all mankind as I do? Some demon, enemy to the demon Ingulphus, induced him to enter those fatal mines in search of a little gold."

Spiagudry, who came back with Gill's skull, interrupted him. "Your excellency is right; 'gold itself,' said Snorro Sturleson, 'is often bought at too high a price.'"

"You remind me of a commission I have for you," said

the little man. "Here is an iron box that I found on that officer. You had not everything of his, as you see. It is so firmly closed that it must contain gold—the most precious article in the sight of men. Take it to Widow Stadt, who lies in the village of Thoetree, to compensate her for her son's loss."

He opened his bag, made of reindeer skins, and brought forth a small iron box. Spiagudry received it with a bow.

"Mind you faithfully carry out my orders," said the little man, giving him a piercing look. "Remember, nothing can prevent two demons meeting again. You are more of a coward than a miser, and you are answerable to me for this casket."

"Oh, master! on my soul——"

"Nonsense; more for the sake of your flesh and bones."

At this moment loud knocking was heard on the outer door of the Spladgest. The little man looked astonished.

Spiagudry started, and shaded the lamp with his hand.

"What is that?" grumbled the little man. "You old wretch, when the trumpet sounds for the last judgment, how you will tremble then."

The knocking was repeated with greater force.

"It is some corpse in a hurry to be admitted," said the little man.

"No, master," whispered Spiagudry, "bodies are never brought here after midnight."

"Dead or living, he drives me away. Spiagudry, you be faithful and silent. I swear to you by the spirit of Ingulphus and Gill's skull, that in this inn for corpses you shall have a review of the whole of the Munckholm regiment."

The little man, hanging the skull to his girdle, and putting on his gloves, he, with the help of Spiagudry's shoulders, sprang with the bound of a chamois through the outlet in the roof, and disappeared.

A third blow made the dead-house resound; and a voice was heard in command, that the door was at once to be opened in the name of the king and the viceroy.

The old guardian, agitated by his fears of the past and his fears for the future, slowly made his way toward the door, and threw it open.

## CHAPTER VII.

## CHECKMATED.

When Poel had left, the Governor of Drontheim seated himself in his arm-chair, and, by way of distraction, ordered one of his secretaries to read him the petitions presented before government.

The latter bowed, and at once commenced :

"1. The Reverend Doctor Anglyvius petitions that he may succeed the Reverend Doctor Foxtipp, removed from incapacity, as director of the Episcopal Library. The petitioner doubts if any one could replace the ignorant doctor; at the time wishing it to be known that he, Doctor Anglyvius, has occupied the post of librarian——"

"Refer this idiot to the bishop," interrupted the general."

"2. Athanase Munder, priest, prison chaplain, begs for pardon to be granted to twelve penitent criminals, on the occasion of the illustrious wedding which is to take place between Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Danneborog, son of the viceroy, and the noble Lady Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, daughter of his grace the Count d'Ahlefeld, grand chancellor of the Two Kingdoms."

"Adjourn that petition," said the general. "I pity the criminals."

"3 Fauste Prudens Destrombides, a Norwegian, a writer of Latin poetry, petitions to be allowed to compose an epithalamium on the noble couple."

"Ah! ah! the good man must have grown old, for he is the same man who, in 1674, wrote an epithalamium on the proposed marriage between Schumacker, then Count of Griffenfeld, and the Princess Louise Charlotte of Holstein-Augustenburg, which never took place."

I have an idea," said the governor to himself, "that Fauste Prudens is more likely to compose an ode on broken-off marriages. Adjourn the petition, and continue. With regard to the poet, we must see if there is not a vacancy at Drontheim Asylum."

"4. The miners from Guldbranshal, the Faroe Isles, Sund Moer, Hubfalls, Røeraas and Konigsberg, petition to be free from the royal tax."

"These miners are dissatisfied. It is said that they are

already murmuring at the long silence maintained with regard to their petition. Let it be put aside for careful examination."

"5. Braall, fisherman, petitions in virtue of the *Odelrecht*,\* that he may repurchase his holdings."

"6. The Syndics of Noes, Lœvig, Indal, Skongen, Stod, Sparbo, and other towns and villages in the Northern Drontheimhus, petition that a price be put on the head of the brigand, assassin, and incendiary Han, a native of Klipstadur, in Iceland. A counter petition from Nyehol Orugix, executioner of the Drontheimhus, who maintains that Han is his property. He is seconded by Benignus Spiagudry, guardian of the Spladgest, who claims the corpse."

"This brigand is a dangerous fellow," said the governor, "particularly when a revolt among the miners is to be feared. Let it be proclaimed that a reward of a thousand royal crowns will be paid for his head."

"7. Benignus Spiagudry, doctor, antiquary, sculptor, mineralogist, naturalist, botanist, lawyer, chemist, mechanic, physician, astronomer, theologian, grammarian——"

"Well, well!" interrupted the general, "is not this the same Spiagudry, the guardian of the Spladgest?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied the secretary, continuing, "guardian of the royal establishment called the Spladgest, situated in the town of Drontheim, maintains that he, Benignus Spiagudry, discovered that the planets are not illumined by the sun, and it was by his advice and direction that the old statue of Freya now represents the statue of Justice, standing in the large square at Drontheim. The lion at the base of the idol has been effaced to give place to a devil, the picture of crime."

"Spare me a further record of his eminent services. What does he want?"

The secretary turned over several sheets, and added:

"The humble servant, in virtue of the many works he has contributed to science and literature, petitions that your excellency will augment the price given for every corpse, both male and female—a fact pleasing to the dead, as it would prove the value set upon them."

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\**Odelrecht* was a singular law by which Norwegian peasants had a right to repurchase their holdings, by giving notice to that effect every ten years, thus preventing the present tenant from disposing of the same.



At this moment the door was thrown open, and the usher announced :

"The noble lady, the Countess d'Ahlefeld."

A tall lady entered, wearing a countess' coronet on her head, richly dressed in scarlet satin, bordered with ermine and gold fringe, and taking the general's proffered hand, she seated herself near to him. The countess was about fifty years of age. Pride and ambition had left their traces on her face, adding years to her looks, which time might have spared.

"Well, my lord general," said she, with her scornful and false glance, "your pupil is keeping us waiting; he was to be here before sunset."

"He would have been here, countess, had he not left for Munckholm soon after his arrival."

"What, to Munckholm? I hope he has not gone in search of Schumacker."

"It is quite possible."

"The Baron of Thorwick's first visit to be paid to Schumacker!"

"Do you mean to say, general, that the viceroy's son is in league with a State prisoner?"

"When Frederic Guldenlew placed his son under my charge, noble lady, he wished me to bring him up as I would my own. I considered Schumacker's acquaintance would be useful to Ordener, who will occupy a high position. With the viceroy's consent I obtained from my brother, Grummond of Knud, the right of entry to all the prisons, and I gave Ordener the written permission of which he has availed himself."

"How long is it, noble general, since Baron Ordener made this useful acquaintance?"

"More than a year ago, countess. He must have found pleasure in Schumacker's society, judging from the length of his visit to Dronthem; and it was only at my express wish that he left last year to make a tour in Norway."

"Does Schumacker know that his consoler is the son of one of his bitterest enemies?"

"He believes him to be a friend, and that is sufficient for him, as it would be for us."

"But you, my lord general," said the countess, with a penetrating glance, "were you aware, when tolerating, or rather, forwarding, this intimacy, that Schumacker has a daughter?"

"I knew it, countess."

"And you considered this a matter of indifference to your pupil?"

"Leven of Knud's ward, Frederic Guldenlew's son, is a man of honor. Ordener knows the barrier which separates him from Schumacker's daughter, and he is incapable of dishonorably courting any girl, particularly an unfortunate man's daughter."

The noble Countess d'Ahlefeld blushed, and then became pale. She turned her head aside, in order to avoid the old man's accusing look.

"At all events," she stammered, "you must allow me to say, general, that I consider this acquaintance both singular and imprudent. Report says that the miners and the people in the northern division are in open revolt, and that Schumacker is compromised in this affair."

"Noble lady, you surprise me," exclaimed the governor. "Schumacker has calmly borne his misfortunes until now. There is doubtless no foundation for all this."

The usher at this moment appeared at the door to say that a messenger had arrived from his grace the grand chancellor for the noble countess.

The lady rose hurriedly, bowed, and, leaving the governor to continue his work, she hastened to her own apartments, situated in a wing of the palace, and ordered the messenger to be brought before her.

She was seated in the midst of her ladies-in-waiting, when the envoy was announced. The countess cast a look of involuntary repugnance toward him, which she hastened to replace by a smile. At the first glance, the new-comer presented anything but a repulsive appearance. He was of medium height, his corpulency denoting anything but a messenger. On a closer inspection, the openness of his face was really insolence, and his jovial manner concealed something diabolical and sinister. He bowed profoundly to the countess, and presented her with a sealed packet.

"Noble lady," said he, "permit me to place at your feet a precious message from his grace, your illustrious husband, my respected master."

"Is he not coming himself? and why is it he makes you his messenger?" asked the countess.

"His grace is detained upon matters of importance; this letter will explain all. My noble master desired me to speak to you in private."

The countess turned pale, and exclaimed, in trembling accents:

"A private interview with you, Musdæmon?"

"If this causes the noble lady any annoyance, her unworthy servant will be in despair."

"Annoyance! oh, not at all," replied the countess, forcing a smile; but is this interview really necessary?"

The envoy bowed to the ground.

"Absolutely necessary. The letter the illustrious countess has deigned to receive at my hands expresses the formal injunction."

It was a strange sight to see the haughty Countess d'Ahlefeld tremble and grow pale before one of the retinue, who treated her with such profound respect. She leisurely unfastened the packet, and read the contents. After another perusal, she turned to the ladies, saying, in a faint voice:

"Leave me; I would be alone."

"Noble lady," said the messenger, bending the knee before her, "pardon the liberty I am taking, and the annoyance I am causing you."

"On the contrary," answered the countess, with a forced smile, "I am happy to see you."

The ladies retired.

"Elphege, have you forgotten the time when a tete-a-tete with me was not repugnant to you?"

These words came from the messenger to the noble countess. They were accompanied by a laugh such as Satan would give when the compact has expired and he claims the soul his own.

The noble lady bent her humiliated head.

"Would that I had forgotten!" she murmured.

"Poor, foolish thing. Why do you blush for what no human creature knows?"

"Men may not know, but God sees into every heart."

"God, you weak woman! Why, you are not worthy of having deceived your husband, for he is less credulous than you are."

"You show little generosity by ridiculing my feelings of remorse, Musdæmon."

"Well, then, Elphege, if so, why add to them by daily committing fresh crimes?"

The countess hid her face in her hands.

"Elphege, you must take your choice—either remorse and no more crimes, or the crime and no further remorse. Do as I have done, choose the latter—it is far the best, and decidedly the more cheerful."

"It is to be hoped," said the countess, in a low tone, "you will find these words in eternity."

Musdœmon took a seat near the countess, and passed his arm round her neck, saying:

"Now, my dear, joking apart, try, Elphege, to be the same in spirit as you were twenty years since."

The unfortunate countess, the slave of her accomplice, tried to respond to this degrading caress. There was something too revolting in the embraces of these two beings, who despised and execrated each other, even to the fallen creatures themselves. Forbidden endearments, which had once been their joy—now they enforced them upon each other—became torture. The just and strange change of guilty affection. The crime becomes its own punishment.

The countess, to shorten her sufferings, asked her odious lover, as she released herself from his clasp, what verbal message her husband had given him.

"D'Ahlefeld," said Musdœmon, "at the very moment he was about to strengthen his influence by the marriage of Ordener Guldenlew with our daughter——"

"Our daughter!" exclaimed the haughty countess, with a look of pride and disdain at Musdœmon.

"Well," coldly replied the envoy, "I think Ulrica—but never mind. I was telling you that this marriage will not alone satisfy your husband, if he cannot at the same time compass Schumacker's complete downfall. This old favorite is from the depths of his prison, almost as much to be feared as he was in his palace. He has some friends in the dark at court, the more powerful, perhaps, from their very obscurity. The king, hearing about a month since that the grand chancellor's negotiations with the Duke of Holstein-Plœn were at a stand-still, exclaimed, impatiently: 'Griffenfeld knew as much as all of them put together.' "A plotter named Dispolsen, who had come from Munckholm to Copenhagen, had several audiences with his majesty, after which the king sent for all the deeds deposited with the chancellor, relating to Schumacker's titles and property. At present, we are not aware what Schumacker aims at. If he but asks for liberty, that to a State prisoner means power. He must die, and his condemnation must be done in judicial form. We are endeavoring to convict him of some crime.

"Your husband, Elphege, under pretext of inspecting the Northern Provinces, has gone incognito among the miners, whom we are secretly urging to insurrection, in

the name of Schumacker, which it will afterward be easy to quell. We are anxious about the loss of several important documents relating to the plan, which we believe are in Dispolsen's hands. Knowing that he had left Copenhagen for Muckholm, taking back Schumacker's parchments, diplomas, and perhaps the very papers that would be our death-blow, or at least compromise us, we posted some faithful servants in the passes of the Kole mountains, with instructions to make away with him after having robbed him of his documents. But, if, as I am told, Dispolsen came to Berghen by sea, we have gained nothing for our pains. Yet, on my arrival here, I heard it rumored that a Captain Dispolsen had been murdered. This I must inquire into. We are also in search of a famous brigand, called Han of Iceland, whom we wish to place at the head of the insurgents.

"Now, my dear Elphege, what news have you for me? Has the pretty Munckholm bird been taken alive in her cage?—the old chancellor's daughter. Has our son Frederic——"

The countess' pride was again roused, and she exclaimed:

"Our son!"

"Well, let me see, how old is he? Twenty-four. Why, we are old friends of twenty-six years standing, Elphege."

"Heaven knows," cried the countess, "that my Frederic is the grand chancellor's legitimate heir."

"If Heaven knows it," answered the messenger, jeeringly, "the devil may still be in ignorance. Your Frederic is a harum-scarum fellow, unworthy of me. Why should we quarrel for such a trifle? Has he succeeded with the girl?"

"Not that I know."

"Elphege, you are far too passive in all affairs relating to the count and myself, in which we certainly take an active part. To-morrow I return to your husband. Do not confine yourself simply to prayers for pardon of our sins, as the Italians invoke the Madonna previous to committing a murder. I expect a far greater reward from D'Ahlefeld than he has hitherto bestowed upon me. My fortune is linked with yours, but I am tired of being your husband's servant."

The clock struck the midnight hour, and one of the attendants came to remind the countess that, according to the rules of the palace, all lights were extinguished at that time. The countess, only too delighted to bring this

painful interview to an end, summoned her ladies-in-waiting.

"May I be allowed, noble countess," said Musdœmon, retiring, to have the honor of seeing you to-morrow, to pay my most respectful homage?"

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### "BE FAITHFUL AND SILENT."

"Old man, with all due deference," said Ordener to Spiagudry, "I began to think that the bodies lodged in this building were charged to open the door."

"Pardon me, my lord," replied the guardian, the words king and viceroy still ringing in his ears. "I—I was sleeping heavily," making, as usual, this trifling excuse.

"In that case it is evident your corpses do not sleep, for I distinctly heard them talking just now."

Spiagudry looked confused.

"Then, sir stranger, you overheard?"

"Good heavens! well, yes; but what can it matter? I have not come here about your affairs, but concerning my own. Let us go in."

Spiagudry was by no means anxious the new-comer should see the state of Gill's body; but the last words reassured him, and besides, how could he help himself?

He therefore allowed the young man to enter, and closed the door.

"Benignus Spiagudry," he said, "is at your service for all that concerns human science. If, judging from your late visit, you believe you are addressing yourself to a sorcerer, you are in error; I am only a scholar. Let us retire, sir stranger, to my laboratory."

"Not so," said Ordener; "I would remain with these bodies."

"With these bodies!" exclaimed Spiagudry, trembling. "My lord, you cannot see them."

"What! do you mean to say that I cannot see the bodies which are exposed there for public inspection? Must I repeat that I require you to give me some information respecting one of the dead? Your duty is to answer. Obey me with a good grace, old man, or I will compel you to do so by force."

Spiagudry held sabers in profound respect, and he saw



the glitter of one at Ordener's side. "Nihil non arrogat armis," muttered he. Taking up his keys, he opened the low grating, and introduced the stranger into the inner division of the room.

"Show me the captain's clothes," said the latter.

At this moment the light fell on Gill Stadt's mutilated remains.

"Just heavens!" exclaimed Ordener; "what horrible profanation!"

"Good Saint Hospice, have pity on me," murmured the guardian.

"Old man," continued Ordener, in threatening tones, "is death so far off that you dare to disrespect its sanctity? Are you not afraid, you wretched creature, lest the living should teach you how to honor the dead?"

"Oh!" cried the poor guardian, "have mercy; it was not I—if you only knew——"

He suddenly stopped, for he remembered the little man's words: "Be faithful and silent."

"Did you ever see any one leave by this outlet?" he inquired, in a faint voice.

"Yes; was it your accomplice?"

"No; it was the criminal himself—the only guilty party. I swear it by all the powers of hell, by all the blessings of Heaven, by this corpse that has been so shamefully profaned," said he, throwing himself on the stones at Ordener's feet.

Hideous as Spiagudry was, there was an accent of truth in his despairing protestations which convinced his hearer.

"Old man," said he, "arise. If you have not outraged the dead, do not debase your old age. Who is the criminal?"

"Oh! silence, noble sir; you are ignorant of whom you are speaking. Silence!" and Spiagudry inwardly repeated, "Be faithful and silent."

"Who is the criminal?" repeated Ordener, coldly. "I will know his name."

"In the name of Heaven, my lord, do not say so. Be quiet, for fear of——"

"Fear shall not silence me, but it shall make you speak."

"Excuse me, my young master; pardon me," cried the distracted Spiagudry, "I cannot."

"You can, and you shall. Tell me the name of this mutilator."

Spiagudry tried to evade the question.

"Noble sir, the mutilator of that corpse is the officer's murderer."

"The officer then was murdered?" asked Ordener, recalled by this speech to the object of his researches.

"Yes, beyond a doubt, my lord."

"And by whom, by whom?"

"By the saint that your mother invoked at your birth, do not ask his name, my young master, and force me not to reveal it."

"If anything could increase the interest I have in knowing it, you have certainly aroused my curiosity. I command you to give up the name of the murderer."

"Well, then, look at the appearance of the unfortunate corpse. You will see how the flesh has been torn by long and sharp claws," said Spiagudry, pointing to the severe and jagged wounds made on the victim's body. "These will tell you the murderer's name."

"Do you mean," said Ordener, "that he was attacked by some wild beast?"

"No, my young lord."

"Unless it was the devil——"

"Hush! lest you should guess rightly. Have you never heard," continued the guardian, in a low tone, "of a man, or rather, monster, with a human face, whose nails are as long as those of Astaroth, the cause of our downfall, or of the Antichrist, who in the future will be so?"

"Speak more clearly."

"'Woe be,' says the Scripture——"

"I am asking you for the murderer's name."

"The murderer—the name—my lord—have pity upon me, have pity on yourself."

"Your last prayer would prevent my heeding the first, even if I were not actuated by far graver reasons in forcing you to give up this name. Do not overtax my patience."

"As you insist upon it, young man," said Spiagudry, drawing himself together, "this murderer, this mutilator, is Han of Iceland."

This much-dreaded name was familiar to Ordener.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Han, the execrable bandit?"

"Do not call him a bandit, for he always lives alone."

"Ah! miserable wretch, how is it you know him? What crimes have been the link between you?"

"Oh, noble master, do not judge by appearances. Is

the trunk of the oak poisoned because it sometimes shelters the serpent?"

"No more idle words; the friend of a villain is always his accomplice."

"I am not his friend, and far less his accomplice. If the oaths I have sworn have failed to convince you, pray consider what this infamous mutilation entails upon me in the next twenty-four hours, when they come to remove Gill Stadt's body. I shall be accused of sacrilege, and pass the most fearful time an innocent man ever had to undergo."

These personal considerations had far more weight upon Ordener than the poor guardian's supplications, who had probably been guided by the former feeling when making a resistance to the little man's sacrilegious onslaught.

During the moment Ordener was considering, Spiagudry watched his face most anxiously for the signs of peace or war.

"Old man, be truthful," he continued, in a calm and severe tone. "Did you find any papers on that officer?"

"None, on my honor."

"Do you know if Han of Iceland found any?"

"I swear to you by Saint Hospice that I am ignorant of the fact."

"You know nothing then about it? Can you tell me where Han hides himself?"

"He never hides—he is always wandering."

"That may be; but where are his haunts?"

"The heathen," replied the old man in a low tone, "has as many haunts as the Island of Hitteren has reefs, or the star Sirius has rays."

"Again I must urge you," interrupted Ordener, "to speak more positively. I will show you the example; listen to me. You are linked in some mysterious way with this brigand, if, as you maintain, you are not the accomplice. You know him, and therefore you must be aware where he is to be found. Do not interrupt me; if you are not his accomplice, you will not hesitate to guide me in my researches for him."

Spiagudry could not conceal his terror.

"Great heavens! you, my noble lord—you, so full of life, will you provoke and seek out, this fiend? When Ingiald with the four arms fought the giant Nycolm, at least he had four arms."

"Well," returned Ordener, smiling, "if four arms are necessary, will you not then be my guide?"

"I, your guide? How can you jeer an old man, who has need of a guide himself?"

"Listen," continued Ordener, "and do not try to deceive me. If this profanation, of which I am willing to believe you innocent, exposes you to the penalty for sacrilege, you cannot remain here; you must fly. I offer you my protection, on condition that you show me the brigand's retreat. Be my guide, and I will be your guardian. I will even say more: if Han of Iceland comes within my reach, I will bring him back dead or alive. You can then prove your innocence, and I promise you shall be restored to your position. Meanwhile, here are more royal crowns for you than you would earn in a year."

Ordener, by keeping the purse to the last, had maintained in his arguments the various gradations according to the principles of logic. This reasoning had great weight with Spiagudry. He began by taking the money.

"Noble master, you are right," said he, looking for the first time full at Ordener. "If I follow you, I expose myself to the vengeance of the formidable Han. If I remain here, to-morrow I shall be handed over to Orugix, the executioner. What is the penalty for sacrilege? Not that it matters. In either case, my wretched life is in peril; but according to Sæmond Sigfusson's wise remark, otherwise termed the sage, '*inter duo pericula æqualia, minus imminens eligendum est*,' I will follow you. Yes, my lord, I will be your guide. Pray remember that I have done my utmost to dissuade you from this adventure."

"Very well," said Ordener. "You are, then, to be my guide;" adding, with a piercing look, "I reckon upon your fidelity."

"Ah, master," replied the guardian, "Spiagudry's faith is as pure as the gold you have been so graciously pleased to give him."

"So let it be. I will prove to you that my steel is quite as pure as my gold. Where do you think Han of Iceland is to be found?"

"As the south of the Drontheimhus is filled with troops, sent there at the grand chancellor's expressed request, Han has doubtless made his way either to Walderlong Grotto or to Lake Smiasen. We must take the road through Strongen."

"When will you be ready to go?"

"It is now the dawn of day; to-night when the Spladgest is closed, your humble servant will be ready to enter upon his duties as guide, and the dead will thus be deprived of his care. I shall take precautions to-day to conceal from all the mutilation of the miner's corpse."

"Where shall I find you this evening?"

"In Drontheim's great square, near the statue of Justice, formerly styled Freya, beneath whose shades I shall doubtless find protection, if only from gratitude for the handsome devil I had sculptured at its base."

Spiagudry was about to give a verbal report of his petition to the governor, when Ordener interrupted him:

"That is quite sufficient, old man. Our compact is then agreed."

"Yes, it is agreed," repeated the guardian.

A distinct growl was heard overhead.

"What's that?" said the keeper, trembling.

"Are there any other living beings here besides ourselves?" Ordener inquired, equally surprised at the interruption.

"You remind me of my assistant, Oglypiglap," replied Spiagudry, reassured by this idea. "He is no doubt snoring. 'A Lapp sleeping,' says Bishop Arngrim, 'makes as much noise as a woman when awake.'"

While thus talking, they reached the door of the Spladgest, or mortuary.

"Farewell, my young master. May Heaven help you. This evening, should you be near the cross of Saint Hospice, deign to offer up a prayer for your wretched servant, Benignus Spiagudry."

Hastily closing the door, as much from the fear of being seen as to protect the lamp from the morning breeze, he turned his attention to Gill Stadt's remains, and shifted the head to a position which helped to conceal the mutilation.

Many reasons had actuated the timid guardian in accepting the stranger's adventurous offer. First, the fear of Ordener himself. Second, the dread of the executioner Orugix. Third, hatred of Han of Iceland—a feeling he was terrified at even owning to himself. Fourth, a love of science, the knowledge of which would be increased by this journey. Fifth, confidence in his own cunning shielding him from Han's vengeance. Sixth, a special interest in certain metal to be found in the young adventurer's purse, and evidently also in the iron

casket stolen from the captain, and destined for Widow Stadt, which now ran the risk of never leaving the messenger's hands. And lastly, he entertained the hope of being sooner or later re-established in the position he was about to abandon. What mattered it to him if the brigand killed the traveler, or the latter killed the brigand? At this point in his reverie he could not help saying aloud:

"Besides, in any case, I shall be the gainer of one corpse."

Another growl was heard, which made the miserable guardian shake with fright.

"That is not Oglypiglap snoring," said he to himself. "That noise comes from outside. But how foolish I am to be nervous; it is only some dog barking on the quay."

He then finished arranging Gill's body, and, after closing all doors, he sought his own pallet, to repose from the fatigues of the night, and to strengthen himself for those to come.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CODE OF HONOR.

Munckholm Castle beacon had just gone out, and in its place the sailor entering Drontheim Gulf could see the sentinel's helmet shining from the distance in the rays of the sun like a fixed star, when Schumacker, leaning on his daughter's arm, came down, according to his usual custom, in the garden surrounding the prison. Both had passed restless nights—the old man from sleeplessness, the young girl from delightful dreams. They walked in silence for some time, the old captive watching his daughter with a grave and mournful look.

"You blush and smile to yourself, Ethel. You are happy; for you have nothing to blush at in the past, and you can afford to smile at the future."

Ethel flushed deeply, and ceased to smile.

"My lord and father," said she, greatly confused, "I have brought your book, the Edda."

"Very well, child; then read it to me," said Schumacker, relapsing into reverie.

The mournful captive, seated on a rock beneath the fir's dark shade, listened to the young girl's sweet voice without taking in the sense of reading, as the thirsty



traveler listens to the murmuring of the brook which means life to him.

Ethel reads the story of the shepherdess Allanga, who refused to accept a king's offer until he had proved himself to be a warrior. Prince Regner Lodbrog, having vanquished the brigand of Klipstadur, Ingulphus the Exterminator, claimed the hand of the shepherdess.

Suddenly there came the sound of footsteps on the fallen leaves, arresting the reader's attention, and arousing Schumacker from his reverie. Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld made his appearance before them. Ethel bent down her head on recognizing her continual visitor.

"Is it possible, beautiful lady, that I heard the name of Ingulphus the Exterminator pronounced by your charming lips? I suppose you were speaking of his grandson, Han of Iceland—that recalled him to your memory? Young ladies have a fancy for speaking about brigands. Many agreeable stories, and some terrible ones, are related of Ingulphus and his descendants. The Exterminator had one son, born of the witch Thoarka; this heir also had an only son, the child of a sorceress. During four centuries this race has been the desolation of Iceland, never more than one branch of the family tree existing. It is by these solitary heirs that the infernal spirit of Ingulphus has come down in all its entirety to the famous Han of Iceland, who has just now been happy enough to occupy your maiden thoughts."

The officer paused for a moment. Ethel was silent, from embarrassment, Schumacker from weariness. Delighted to find them disposed to listen, if not to talk, the lieutenant continued:

"The brigand of Klipstadur has but one passion—hatred of mankind; no desire but to injure them——"

"He is wise," interrupted the old man, harshly.

"He lives always alone."

"He is happy," said Schumacker.

The lieutenant was glad of this double interruption, which gave him a link for further conversation.

"May the god Mithra preserve us from being such wise and happy men. Accursed be the ill-omened wind that brought the last of the demons of Iceland to Norway. I ought not to say ill-omened, for they say it is owing to a bishop that we have the felicity of possessing Han of Klipstadur. According to tradition, some Iceland peasants found Han, then a child, wandering in the Bessesled Mountains. They were about to kill him, as Astyager

destroyed the lion cub of Bactriana, but the bishop interceded on his behalf, and took the cub under his protection, hoping to make a Christian of the devil. The good bishop made every effort to develop his diabolical intellect, forgetting that the hemlock in the hot-house of Babylon never changed into the lily. This imp of darkness repaid all his care by taking flight one fine night across the sea, in the trunk of a tree, previously setting fire to the episcopal manor to lighten up the way. According to the old women's tales, this is the way the Icelander reached Norway, and he offers the most complete type of a monster, with all the benefits of a good education. Since then the Faroe Mines have fallen in, burying three hundred workmen beneath the ruins; the projecting rock Golyn fell on a village; the bridge of Half-Broen, the height of the cliffs, gave way with all its passengers; Drontheim Cathedral has been burnt down; the beacons on the coast were extinguished during a stormy night; Lakes Sparbo and Smiasen could tell a tale of crimes and murders, besides those committed in the grottoes of Walderhog and Rylas or in Dovre-Feld ravines, proving only too well the presence of this incarnate Arimanes in the Drontheimhus. Old women relate, that with every crime a fresh hair shoots forth in his beard. It should now be bushy enough for the most venerable of Assyrian magicians. The fair lady doubtless knows that the governor has more than once endeavored to stop the extraordinary growth of this beard——"

Schumacker again broke silence.

"All attempts to take this man have then been in vain?" said he, with an ironical smile. "I must congratulate the grand chancellor."

The officer did not understand the ex-grand chancellor's sarcasm.

"Han, up to this time, has remained as impregnable as Horatius Cocles. Old soldiers, young militiamen, countrymen, mountaineers—all are killed or flee before him. He is a demon you can neither compass nor avoid; and the most fortunate thing for those in search of this man is to fail in finding him. Charming lady," he continued, seating himself familiarly near Ethel, who drew closer to her father, "you are doubtless surprised at the knowledge I possess concerning this supernatural being. I have a purpose in gathering together these singular traditions. I shall be delighted if my fair listener is of the same mind as myself—that Han's adventures would make a most

thrilling romance, after the style of Mademoiselle Scudery's delightful works, such as "Artamenes" or "Clelie," of which I have only read six volumes, none the less a chef-d'œuvre in my eyes. One must soften down our climate, embellish our traditions, and modify our barbarous names. Thus Drontheim would become Durtinianum; its forests would change, beneath my magic wand, into most delicious groves, watered by many a little rivulet, much more poetical than our ugly torrents. Our deep and gloomy caverns should be made into charming grottoes, lined with gilded rockwork and azure shells. One of these grottoes should be inhabited by the famous enchanter, Hannus of Thule, for you must allow that the name of Han of Iceland is not pleasing to the ear. This giant—it would be absurd for the hero of such a work to be anything but a giant—whose descent traces in direct line from the god Mars (Ingulphus the Exterminator presents nothing to the imagination), and the sorceress Theone—have I not well altered the name of Thoarka?—daughter of the Sybil of Cuma. Hannus, after being brought up by the great magician of Thule, would escape from the pontiff's palace on a chariot drawn by two dragons. It would show but a poor imagination to keep up the paltry tradition—the trunk of a tree. Arrived at Durtinianum, charmed by its sunny clime, he makes it his place of residence, and the theater of his crimes. It would be somewhat of a difficult task to draw a pleasing picture of Han's depredations. An imaginary love scene might soften down their many horrors. The shepherdess Alcippe, walking with her lamb through the myrtle and olive groves, should be perceived by the giant, who falls in love with her. Alcippe's heart is given to the handsome Lycidas, a militia officer quartered in the village. This giant is enraged at the soldier's good fortune, and the soldier resents the giant's attentions. You can imagine, fair lady, the charm that could be given to such adventures as those of Hannus. I will bet my pair of Cracovian boots against a pair of skates, that, with such a subject, Mademoiselle de Scudery would write a romance that would make all the Copenhagen ladies go into ecstasies."

The mention of the capital aroused Schumacker from his gloomy reverie, regardless of the lieutenant's ineffectual efforts to amuse him.

"Copenhagen?" said he; "is there any fresh news from there, lieutenant?"

"Nothing that I am aware of, unless it be the king's consent to this important marriage, which occupies the mind of all connected with both kingdoms."

"What do you mean?" returned Schumacker; "to whose marriage are you alluding?"

The appearance of a fourth person arrested the lieutenant's reply. All three raised their eyes. The prisoner's face brightened up, the lieutenant's changed from gay to grave, Ethel's sweet expressive countenance, looking pale and confused during the officer's lengthy soliloquy, was now suffused with life and happiness. She gave a deep sigh of relief, with a quick, sad smile at the new-comer.

It was Ordener.

The old man, the young girl, and the officer were singularly placed with regard to Ordener—each one shared a secret in common with him which caused them mutual embarrassment. Neither Schumacker nor Ethel were surprised at Ordener's return, for they expected him.

The lieutenant was as much astonished at seeing Ordener as the latter was at his presence. The new-comer would have doubted the officer's discretion regarding the scene on the previous evening had the laws of honor been less strict on the subject. He was, nevertheless, surprised at seeing him quietly seated near the two prisoners.

The four persons thus assembled had nothing to relate. If each one were left with a companion, the case would have been far different.

Ordener was received in silence, with no other welcome than glances of delight and embarrassment.

The lieutenant burst into a laugh.

"By the train of the royal robe, my dear new-comer, this silence much resembles that of the Senate of Gaul, when the Roman Brennus—— I really forget who were Roman or Gauls, the senate or the general. Never mind. As you are here, help me in giving this honorable old gentleman the news of the day. When you appeared on the scene I was about telling him of this illustrious marriage which now fills the mind of all Medes and Persians."

"What marriage?" exclaimed both Ordener and Schumacker.

"By the cut of your clothes, sir stranger," cried the lieutenant, clapping his hands, "I thought you came from some other world. This question convinces me I am right. You landed yesterday, I suppose, on the banks of the Nidder, from a fairy chariot, drawn by two griffins.

You could not have been in Norway without hearing of the celebrated marriage about taking place between the viceroy's son and the grand chancellor's daughter."

"What! Ordener Guldenlew going to espouse Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?" said Schumacker hastily.

"You have rightly said," answered the lieutenant; "the wedding will take place before French farthingales have gone out of fashion at Copenhagen."

"Frederic's son must be twenty-two, for I had been stationed a year at Copenhagen Castle when the news of his birth reached me. He is young to marry," continued Schumacker, with a bitter smile. "When the time of his disgrace arrives, they cannot accuse him of trying for a cardinal's hat."

The lieutenant did not understand the old favorite's allusion to his own misfortunes.

"No, indeed," said the officer, laughing. "Baron Ordener is to receive the title of count, the collar of the Order of the Elephant, the rank of colonel, which would hardly go well with a cardinal's hat."

"So much the better," replied Schumacker, giving his head an ominous shake, as though he saw vengeance of his wrongs in the union. "Some day they will turn his titled collar into an iron one, they will shatter his count's coronet on his forehead, and strike him on the face with his colonel's epaulettes."

Ordener seized the old man's hand.

"Even in your hatred, my lord, lay not a curse on your enemy's happiness before you know whether he looks upon his fate as such."

"How now," said the lieutenant, "what can the Baron of Thorwick care for this old fellow's curses?"

"Lieutenant," exclaimed Ordener, "they carry more weight than you think, perhaps, and as for this famous marriage, it is not so certain as you seem to believe."

"Fiat quod vis," replied the lieutenant, with a sarcastic bow; "the king, the viceroy, and the grand chancellor have certainly arranged this union; they wish it, and moreover command it shall be so. But as it does not meet with your approval, sir stranger, what matters about the grand chancellor, the viceroy, and the king?"

"You are perhaps right," said Ordener, gravely.

"On my honor," exclaimed the lieutenant, laughing immoderately, "this is too good a joke. I wish the Baron of Thorwick were present to hear one so well versed in the world's doings regulating his fate. My learned prophet,



believe me, you have not enough beard for a sorcerer."

"Sir lieutenant," replied Ordener, coldly, "I do not think that Ordener Guldenlew would marry any woman without loving her."

"Oh! oh! You must have the book of maxims by heart. And who tells you, Sir Green Mantle, that the baron does not love Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?"

"And pray who told you he does love her?"

The lieutenant, carried away by the heat of the argument, asserted a fact of which he was by no means sure.

"Who says that he loves her? Your question is somewhat amusing. I am sorry for your powers of divination, but everybody knows this marriage is one of inclination as much as of policy."

"Myself excepted," said Ordener, gravely.

"Yourself excepted. What can that matter? You cannot prevent the viceroy's son from being in love with the chancellor's daughter."

"In love?"

"Yes, madly in love."

"He would indeed be mad to be in love with her."

"Hold! do not forget to whom, and of whom you are speaking. You would have us believe that the viceroy's son could not be infatuated with a lady without consulting a boor like yourself."

While thus speaking, the lieutenant hastily rose. Ethel, who saw Ordener's eyes flash, rushed before him.

"Ob, pray calm yourself, said she; "take no heed of his insults. What can it matter to us if the viceroy's son love the chancellor's daughter?"

The touch of her gentle hand calmed the tempest in the young man's breast. He glanced at Ethel with a passionate longing, heedless of the lieutenant's words.

The latter gayly exclaimed:

"The lady would fill with infinite grace the part of one of the Sabine matrons, interposing between their fathers and their husbands. I have not measured my words," said he, addressing himself to Ordener; "I forgot the link that binds us, forbidding us to provoke each other. Chevalier, give me your hand; but you must allow that you also must have forgotten that you were speaking of the viceroy's son to his future brother-in-law, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld."

At this name Schumacker, who had been indifferent to all that was passing, leaped from the stone bench on which he was seated, with a cry of rage."



"D'Ahelefeld! a d'Ahlefeld before me. Serpent, how was it that I did not trace the execrable father in the son? Leave me at peace in my dungeon; I was not condemned to have you before my eyes. There is nothing wanting now but to see" (as he dared to express) "Guldenlew's son standing side by side with d'Ahefeld's son. Traitors! cowards! let them come to rejoice at my tears and my madness. Accursed race! son of d'Ahlefeld! leave me!"

The officer, for the moment overwhelmed by this torrent of imprecations, soon recovered his powers of speech.

"Silence! you old madman. Have you come to an end of your fiendish litanies?"

"Leave me, leave me, I say," continued the old man; "take my curse with you, and may it follow that miserable race of Guldenlew, which is soon to be allied to yours."

"By Heaven!" cried the enraged officer; "this is a double insult."

Ordener interfered, as the lieutenant was beside himself.

"Respect old age, even in your enemy, lieutenant. We have a debt to settle; I will take the prisoner's insults upon myself, and give you satisfaction."

"Very well, you must answer for a double share; the combat shall be a mortal one, for I have to avenge my brother-in-law as well as myself. When you take up my gauntlet, you also hold that of Ordener Guldenlew."

"Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," replied Ordener, "you warmly defend the absent, a proof of your generosity. Will you not prove it by taking pity on this unfortunate old man, whose very adversaries give him some rights to be unjust?"

D'Ahlefeld was one of those people whose best qualities are brought forward by praise. He shook Ordener by the hand, and approached Schumacker, who, exhausted by his temper, had sunk on the rock, supported in the weeping Ethel's arms.

"Lord Schumacker," said the officer, "you have abused your old age, and I was taking advantage of my youth, if a champion had not interfered on your behalf. I came to pay my last visit to your prison. According to the viceroy's orders, the guard is to be withdrawn, and you are free to wander throughout the tower. I trust you will receive this good news graciously, although it comes from the lips of an enemy."

"Leave me," said the old captive, almost inaudibly.

The lieutenant bowed and withdrew, satisfied with him-

self by having gained Ordener's approving glance. Schumacker remained some time with his arms folded, and his head bent down, buried in his thoughts. Suddenly he raised his eyes and fixed them on Ordener, who stood silently before him.

"Well, what further news have you?"

"My lord, Captain Dispolsen has been murdered."

The old man's head fell forward.

"His murderer is the famous brigand, Han of Iceland."

"Han of Iceland!" exclaimed Schumacker.

"Han of Iceland!" repeated Ethel.

"He it was who also robbed the captain," pursued Ordener.

"Then," said the captive, "you have heard nothing about an iron casket, stamped with the Griffenfeld arms?"

"No, my lord."

Schumacker buried his head in his hands.

"I will restore them to you, my lord count, you may rely upon it. The murder was committed yesterday morning. Han has fled to the north, and my guide knows his haunts. I am well acquainted with the Drontheimhus mountains, and you may depend I shall find the brigand."

Ethel turned pale. Schumacker rose with a joyful look on his face, glad indeed to find that virtue was still to be met with.

"Noble Ordener," he exclaimed, raising his eyes to heaven, "fare thee well."

He left them, and was soon lost to view in the shrubberies.

Ordener quickly perceived Ethel seated on a rock overgrown with moss, looking as white as an alabaster statue mounted on a black pedestal.

"Great Heaven! my Ethel!" said he, rushing toward her, and clasping her in his arms, "what ails you?"

"Oh!" answered the trembling girl, almost inaudibly, "if you have no love for me, at least have some pity. If your words yesterday were simply meant to deceive me, if it is not to cause my death that you have come to this prison, my Lord Ordener—in the name of Heaven and all the angels renounce this mad design. Ordener! my well-beloved Ordener!" continued she, between her tears, and resting her head on the young man's shoulder, "make this sacrifice for me. Do not go in pursuit of this brigand, this fearful demon, to force him to mortal combat. For whom are you about to risk yourself? Whose interests

can be dearer to you than those of her who but yesterday you called your much-loved wife?"

She ceased, choked by her sobs. Her arms were clasped round Ordener's neck, and her pleading eyes were fixed on his.

"My adored Ethel, you alarm yourself unnecessarily. Heaven will defend the right, and it is in your interest that I am about to take the risk. That iron casket——"

Ethel interrupted him.

"My interest! Your life is everything to me. If you die, Ordener, what is to become of me?"

"Why imagine I shall die, Ethel?"

"Ah! but you do not know what this fiendish brigand Han is. Do you realize the kind of monster you are about to pursue? Have you not heard that he is in league with the powers of darkness? that he can hurl mountains on villages? that his footsteps cause subterraneous caverns to fall in? that his breath extinguishes the beacons on the rocks? And do you believe, Ordener, that you are a match for this giant, who has the devil to help him?—you, with your white hands, armed with only a saber?"

"And your prayers, Ethel; and, strengthened by the feeling that I am fighting for your sake, will help me conquer. Be reassured, my Ethel, this brigand's strength and influence have been greatly exaggerated. He is a man like ourselves—he kills until he is killed himself."

"You will not then listen to me? Mine are but idle words. What is to become of me if you leave me to run from one danger to another, exposing, for I know not what interest, your life, which belongs to me, and placing yourself within reach of this monster?"

Ethel pictured to herself the horrors of the lieutenant's recital, now heightened by love and fear. She continued, in a voice broken by her sobs:

"I assure you, my dear love, you have been deceived as to the nature of this monster by those who say he is but a man. Believe what I tell you, Ordener, before any words of theirs. A thousand efforts have been made to overcome him, and he has destroyed entire regiments. I wish you could hear the same from others; you might then be induced to abandon this idea."

Poor Ethel would have succeeded in her prayers had Ordener been less advanced in this adventure, strengthened by Schumacker's despairing words the evening previously.

"I could tell you, my dear Ethel, that I would not go,

and none the less carry out my project ; but I will not deceive you, even to quiet your fears. I ought not to hesitate between your tears and your interests. Your fortune, your happiness, even your life is in jeopardy. Your life ! Do you hear, my Ethel ?" said he, pressing her tenderly to him.

"What is all that to me?" replied she, despairingly. "My Ordener, are you not my life? Pray do not bring certain and fearful misfortune upon me, to ward off slight and even doubtful ones. What matters it if fortune, life——"

"Ethel, your father's life is at stake."

She tore herself from his arms.

"My father's life !" she murmured, as pale as death.

"Yes, Ethel. This brigand, doubtless urged on by Count Griffenfeld's enemies, has obtained possession of certain papers, the loss of which may compromise your father, and lead to his destruction. I must have these documents, and with them his life."

Ethel remained silent for a few moments ; her face was pale, her tears had dried up, and her bosom heaved painfully. Her eyes had the same look of apathy a criminal evinces when the ax is ready to fall on his head.

"My father's life," she murmured. Then she turned toward Ordener.

"Your work is useless, but continue with it."

Ordener drew her to him.

"Oh, noble-hearted girl, let your heart beat against mine. Generous friend, I will soon return. You shall be mine. I must save your father, and thus prove myself worthy to be his son. My own Ethel."

How depict the feelings of one generous heart when brought in contact with another. If love unites the souls in life-long bonds, who can paint their inexpressible delight? They experience in one short moment all the happiness and glory of existence, embellished by the charm of a generous sacrifice.

"Oh, my Ordener, go ; and if you never return, grief without hope will soon kill me ; I shall have that melancholy consolation."

They both rose, and Ordener, drawing Ethel's arm within his own, clasped her hand, and led her through the winding paths of the garden until they lothfully reached the outer gate. The girl then cut off a tress of her beautiful hair with a pair of golden scissors.

"Take it, Ordener; this will ever be with you, a happiness denied to me."

Ordener pressed his lips upon his loved one's gift. She continued:

"Think of me, Ordener. I will pray for you. My prayers may perhaps have as great weight with the Almighty as your weapons against the demon."

Ordener bent before this angel. His heart was too full for utterance.

For a few moments they remained clasped in each other's arms. When parting, perhaps, forever, Ordener had the melancholy satisfaction of holding Ethel once more to his heart. He fondly pressed a kiss on the young girl's pale brow, and rushed from her presence. The vault echoed the sound of her last word to him, the one sad and sweet—"Farewell."

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## CHAPTER X.

### TUTOR AND PUPIL.

The Countess d'Ahlefeld's ever restless spirit passed a sleepless night. She was reclining on a couch buried in thoughts of the past, wherein crime had brought no real happiness, and sorrow had found no consolation. She was thinking of Musdœmon, whom her guilty illusion had formerly pictured so alluring. Now that she could read into his very soul, he was hateful to her. She, wretched woman, wept, not because she had been deceived, but from her inability to do so any longer. With her regret had no repentance, therefore tears were no relief.

At this moment the door was thrown open, much to her surprise, for she had forbidden any intrusion. She hastily dried the tears from her eyes, and looked up angrily at Musdœmon, whose reappearance gave her a shock, which was only modified by seeing that he was accompanied by her son Frederic.

"Mother," exclaimed the lieutenant, "how is it that you are here? I thought you were at Berghen. Is it the custom for high-born ladies to fly about the country?"

The countess embraced her son warmly, but, like spoilt children, he responded coldly to her endearments. This was perhaps the unfortunate woman's worst punishment. Her well-beloved Frederic was the only being toward



whom she felt pure affection; for often in the most degraded woman the feelings of the mother will still remain.

"I see, my son, that on hearing of my presence at Drontheim you hastened at once to come to me."

"Oh, dear, no. I was bored at being in the fort; I went to town, and there I met Musdœmon, who brought me here."

The poor mother sighed deeply.

"For all that, mother, I am pleased to see you. You can tell me if knots of rose-colored ribbon resting on the knees are still worn at Copenhagen. Have you brought me a bottle of that oil of Jouvence for whitening the skin? I hope you have not forgotten the last romance which has been translated, nor the pale gold braid for my dark-colored doublet, nor the small combs which are now used to keep up the curls, nor——"

The unhappy woman had brought nothing for her son, but the love she lavished solely upon him.

"My dear son, I have been ill; my sufferings made me forgetful of your pleasures."

"You have been ill, mother? Well, but you are better. By the way, how is my pack of Normandy hounds? I would wager that my she-monkey has not had her rose-water bath every night. I expect I shall find my Bilboa parrot dead on my return. When I am absent, no one thinks of my animals."

"Your mother always thinks of you, my son," said the countess, in broken accents.

Even at the hour when the destroying angel comes for his own, to cast the sinner into eternal torment, he would pity such agony as the countess felt now.

Musdœmon turned aside to laugh.

"My Lord Frederic, I can see that you do not intend the bright saber to rust in its iron scabbard. At Munckholm you intend to keep up the name you made for yourself at Copenhagen. Pray tell me, what need for the oil of Jouvence, the rose-colored ribbon, the little combs, all to help you to lay siege to the only feminine fortress in Munckholm Tower which remains impregnable?"

"On my honor it is so," replied Frederic, laughing. "If I have failed, General Schack himself would have done the same. How can you surprise a fort which is always guarded? The touch of her arm is always protected by the sleeve that covers it. The young lady might be as black as the King of Mauritania as far as I am concerned. Why, my dear tutor, in this case you



would be nothing but a student. Modesty is its own safeguard."

"You are right," said Musdœmon; "but if love should follow these delicate attentions, what then?"

Lost time, my friend. Love has found a place there, and goes hand in hand with modesty."

"Indeed, my Lord Frederic, this is something new. With love on your side——"

"And who told you, Musdœmon, that it has anything to do with me?"

"Well, then, to whom are you alluding?" exclaimed Musdœmon and the countess—the latter had remained silent until the lieutenant's words recalled Ordener to her thoughts.

Frederic was about to give them a graphic account of the scene on the previous night, when the silence prescribed by the laws of honor came to his mind; his merriment suddenly turned to visible embarrassment.

"By my faith," said he, "I do not know. Perhaps some boor—some vassal——"

"One of the garrison—some soldier," said Musdœmon, with a burst of laughter.

"What, my son!" exclaimed the countess; "are you sure that she loves a peasant—a vassal? How fortunate if it were so."

"No doubt about it; I am sure of it. And it is not a soldier of the garrison," added the lieutenant, in a tone of pique.

"What I have told you, mother, is quite sufficient for you to have me recalled from the totally useless exile in this dreadful castle."

The countess' face had brightened on hearing this scandal, so compromising to the young girl. Ordener Guldenlew's speedy departure for Munckholm now wore another aspect—the attraction of her son's presence.

"Frederic, you shall presently give us a description of Ethel Schumacker's love-passages. I am not in the least astonished. The daughter of a boor can fancy but one of the same class. Do not abuse the castle; for yesterday it procured you the honor of a visit from a certain person, who thus took the first step toward making your acquaintance."

"What do you mean, mother?" asked the lieutenant, with his eyes wide open; "what person?"

"A truce to your nonsense. Some one came here yesterday. You see, I know all."

"You certainly know more than I do. I vow I saw no faces here yesterday but those of the gargoyles at the corners of the old towers."

"What, Frederic, you saw no one?"

"Not a creature, mother, on my honor."

Frederic, in omitting his opponent, only acted in strict accordance with the laws of honor; besides, he did not count this rustic as anybody.

"But," continued the countess, "was not the viceroy's son at Munckholm yesterday?"

The lieutenant laughed.

"The viceroy's son? Mother, you must be dreaming, or you are joking!"

"Neither one nor the other. Who was on guard yesterday?"

"Myself."

"And you never saw the Baron Ordener?"

"No; I tell you so."

"But think, my son, he may have come incognito. You have never seen him; as you were brought up at Copenhagen, while he was educated at Drontheim. Remember he has, they say, all sorts of caprices and curious ideas. Are you quite sure you saw no one?"

Frederic hesitated for a moment.

"No," he said, "I saw no one; and I have nothing more to tell you."

"In that case," replied the countess, "the baron has not been to Munckholm."

Musdæmon, at first greatly surprised, now listened attentively.

"Permit me, noble lady," said he. "My Lord Frederic, tell me, I pray you, the name of the vassal whom Schumacker's daughter loves?"

He had to repeat the question, for Frederic was buried in thought, and did not hear him.

"I do not know, or rather—— I do not know."

"Well, then, how do you know she loves a vassal at all?"

"Did I say he was a vassal?"

"Yes, certainly, a vassal."

The lieutenant's embarrassment increased. This close questioning, the ideas it suggested, the obligation of the imposed silence, all so helped to confuse him, that he feared for the result.

"Faith, Musdæmon, and you, my noble mother, if questioning is the fashion nowadays, amuse yourselves by

doing so to each other. As for myself, I have nothing more to tell you."

Opening the door hurriedly, he made his escape, leaving them in a flood of conjectures. He heard Musdæmon calling after him, but he quickly made his exit into the court-yard.

The lieutenant mounted his horse, and went toward the harbor, intending to cross to Munckholm, hoping to meet the stranger, who had caused profound thought to enter for once into the giddiest brain to be found in one of the most frivolous of capitals.

"If it were Ordener Guldenlew," he muttered to himself, "alas for poor Ulrica. But no; it is impossible that he could be idiotic enough to prefer the poverty-stricken daughter of a State prisoner to the daughter of a wealthy and powerful minister. If so, it may be but a passing fancy for this girl; and there is no reason a man should not have a little indulgence—it is, indeed, rather the thing. But no, it was not Ordener. The viceroy's son would not wear a shabby coat, an old black feather showing signs of all weathers, a cloak large enough to make a tent, his hair disheveled, without combs, his boots with iron spurs, and covered with mud and dust. Really it could not have been the baron, a knight of the Order of Dannebrog. This stranger wore no decorations; if I possessed the Dannebrog collar I should sleep in it. Besides, he never heard of the 'Clelie.' Oh, no; that could not have been the viceroy's son."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

"Well, Poel, what has brought you here?"

"Your excellency just ordered me to come."

"Oh, yes. It was for that portfolio," said the general; one he could well have reached by simply extending his hand. He turned over some of the papers mechanically, and then continued:

"Poel, I was going to ask you—— What time is it?"

The clock was just under his eyes.

"Ten o'clock in the morning, sir."

"I was going to say, Poel—— What fresh news is there in the palace?" said the general, evidently preoccupied, and taking up his papers he affixed a few notes to them.

"Nothing, your excellency, except that we are expecting our noble master, about whom I see you are uneasy."

The general rose, and gave Poel an angry look.

"Your eyes, then, deceive you. I am anxious about Ordener! I know the reason of his absence; I am not expecting him yet."

General Lein de Knud was so jealous of his own authority that he could not tolerate that a subordinate should divine his secrets thoughts, or even imagine Ordener had acted without orders.

"Poel," he added, "you can go."

"By my faith," exclaimed the governor, when he found himself alone, "Ordener misuses his authority. The constant bending of the blade ends by breaking it. Fancy making me pass such a sleepless night, exposing me, General Levin, to the questions of the chancellor's wife and to a valet's conjectures, and all this because he wanted to embrace an old enemy before doing so to an old friend. Ordener, Ordener, such caprices will put an end to your liberty. Let him come! let him arrive now. I vow I will greet him as the powder does the spark. To dare to expose the Governor of Drontheim to a valet's conjectures—to the sarcasms of the chancellor's wife, indeed! Let him just present himself——"

The general had worked himself up to such a pitch of temper, that he turned over his papers without reading them.

"General! my noble father!" exclaimed a well-known voice; and Ordener put his arms round the old man, who could not repress a cry of joy.

"Ordener, my brave boy. I am glad to see you."

Then, after a moment's reflection, he added:

"I am pleased to know, my lord baron, that you can so well master your feelings. You seem delighted to see me; you punished yourself, no doubt, by waiting twenty-four hours since your return before doing so."

"My father, you have often impressed upon me that an unfortunate enemy should be considered before a prosperous friend. I come from Munckholm."

"No doubt," said the general; "when the enemy is in imminent danger. But Schumacker's future——"

"Is more than ever threatening. Noble general, a most odious conspiracy has been planned against this unhappy man. Men who were born his friends now seek to destroy him. A man who was born his enemy will learn to save him."

The general, who had gradually softened down, interrupted him :

"Good, my dear Ordener ; but how can it be possible ? Schumacker is under my safeguard. What men do you mean ? what plots ?"

Ordener would have been puzzled to answer this question. His information was uncertain, and his ideas very vague regarding the real position of the person for whom he was about to risk his life. Many would blame him for his folly ; but youth's impulse is to act for right and justice, and not to calculate the chances. Besides, in this world, where prudence yields but barren fruits, and wisdom is another word for irony, who can imply that generosity is mere folly ? Everything on this earth is relative, where all has its limits, and virtue itself would be a species of madness if behind there was not a God.

Ordener was at an age when youth believes and is believed. Purely from this feeling he risked his life. The general, actuated by the same ideas, accepted these reasons, which would scarcely have held good in open discussion.

"What plots ? what men ?" you ask, my good father. In a few days I shall have brought all to light ; then I will give you every information I have gained. I must leave to-night."

"What," exclaimed the old man ; "can you not spare me a few hours ? But where are you going, and why must you go, my dear son ?"

"You have sometimes allowed me, my noble father, to perform a praiseworthy action in secret."

"Yes, my brave Ordener ; but you are not at all sure of your errand ; and you know the important matter which demands your presence here."

"My father has given me a month for reflection, and I shall devote that time to another's interests. Good actions engender good resolutions ; on my return you will see."

"Do you mean," replied the general, anxiously, "this marriage is displeasing to you ? Report says Ulrica d'Ahlefeld is beautiful. Have you seen her ?"

"I believe so," said Ordener. "Yes ; she is beautiful."

"Well, then ?" asked the governor.

"She will never be my wife," replied Ordener.

The cold and decisive tone in which this was said gave the general a perfect shock. The haughty countess' suspicions recurred to his mind.

"Ordener," said he, shaking his head, "I ought to know, for I have been a sinner myself. Well, I am an old fool. Ordener, the prisoner has a daughter."

"Yes," exclaimed the young man, "I wished to speak to you about her. Father, I entreat your protection for this helpless and oppressed girl."

"You appeal most earnestly," said the governor, gravely.

Ordener recovered himself, in a measure.

"And why should it not be so, when an unfortunate prisoner's life is in jeopardy, and what is far more precious—her honor."

"Life! honor. But I am governor here, yet I know nothing of all these horrors. Explain yourself."

"My noble father, the lives of the prisoner and his daughter, defenseless as they both are, are threatened by an infamous plot."

"You are making a grave charge; what proof have you?"

"The eldest son of one of our most powerful families is now at Munckholm. His object is to compass Countess Ethel's ruin; he told me so himself."

The general started back with dismay.

"Good Heaven! Poor young creature! Ordener! Ordener! Ethel and Schumacker are under my protection. Who is this wretch? to what family does he belong?"

"The family d'Ahlefeld."

"D'Ahlefeld!" exclaimed the governor. "Yes, it is all clear enough; Lieutenant Frederic is now at Munckholm. And they wish, my noble Ordener, to ally you to such a race! I can quite conceive your repugnance, my brave boy."

The old man remained silent for a short time, then, putting his arms round Ordener, he continued:

"Young man, you can leave without any fear for your *protege*; I will protect them.. Yes, go; it would be better in all respects to do so. That infernal Countess d'Ahlefeld is here; you are perhaps aware of it?"

"The noble Countess d'Ahlefeld," said the usher, throwing open the door.

At the name Ordener mechanically withdrew to the end of the room. The countess entered without perceiving him, and exclaimed:

"My lord general, your pupil has played you a trick: he never went to Munckholm."

"Indeed," said the general.



"Yes; my son Frederic, who has just left the palace, was on guard yesterday, and saw no one."

"Really, noble lady."

"So, general," continued the countess, smiling triumphantly, "do not expect your Ordener."

The governor remained cold and impassive.

"I no longer expect him, my lady countess."

"General, I thought we were alone," said she, looking round, "but who is this?" fixing her piercing glance on Ordener, who simply bowed. "Really—I only saw him once"—but—in another costume it would be—— My lord general, this is the viceroy's son."

"He himself, noble lady," replied Ordener, bowing again.

The countess smiled.

"In that case, will you permit a lady who will soon be nearly related to you to ask where you were yesterday, my lord count?"

"Lord count! I have not had the misfortune of losing my noble father, lady countess."

"Nor did I mean to suggest such an idea. Better become count by taking a wife than by the loss of a father."

"One is quite as objectionable to me as the other, noble lady."

The countess was discomfited at this speech, but passed it off with a laugh.

"What I heard, then, was correct: that your manners were somewhat unpolished. But the company of ladies will soon alter them, when Ulrica d'Ahlefeld places the chain of the Order of the Elephant round your neck."

"A real chain, indeed!" replied he.

"You see, General Levin," pursued the countess, with a forced smile, "that your untractable pupil will not accept the rank of colonel from a lady."

"You are right, countess," answered Ordener; "a man who carries a sword should not owe his epaulettes to a petticoat."

The lady's face was now completely clouded.

"Oh, oh! whence came, then, my lord baron? Is it true that this courteous gentlemen never went to Munkholm yesterday?"

"Noble lady, I am not prepared to satisfy every one's curiosity. General, we shall meet again," said he, shaking the old man's hand.

With a bow to the countess he withdrew, leaving the

lady confused from want of knowledge, and the general indignant at what he had learned.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### SATAN'S ARMORY.

The route from Drontheim to Skongen is both rough and narrow until you reach the village of Vyglå. Two travelers had left Skongen at the close of day, and were rapidly ascending the many hills toward Vyglå. Both were completely enveloped in cloaks. One was upright, and walked with a quick, firm step, his head proudly raised, and the end of a saber was visible beyond his cloak. In spite of the darkness, the plume of his hat could be seen waving in the breeze. The other was taller than his companion, but slightly bent. The hump on his back was doubtless only a knapsack he carried beneath a large black cloak, whose frayed edges denoted both long and loyal service. He carried no weapon but a long stick, which helped to steady his unequal and hurried steps.

If the reader has not recognized the travelers, the following conversation will soon enlighten him.

"Master, my young master, from here we can see the Tower of Vyglå and Drontheim belfry. That black mass before us is the tower, the one behind is the cathedral, whose flying buttresses, darker than the night itself, show forth like the ribs of some defunct mammoth."

"Is Vyglå far from Skongen?" asked the other traveler.

"We have the Ordals to pass, my lord; we shall not reach Skongen till three o'clock in the morning."

"What hour is it striking now?"

"Just Heaven! master; you make me tremble. It is the bell sounding from Drontheim. When the wind echoes the peal, it denotes a storm. Clouds follow a north-west breeze."

"The stars have certainly all disappeared."

"Pray let us hasten forward, or the storm will soon overtake us, and by this time they have perhaps discovered the mutilation of Gill's body, and my disappearance."

"Willingly, old man. Your burden seems heavy; let me carry it for you. I am younger and stronger than you are."

"I am not at an age when a tortoise can well support his shell, but I should be ashamed to allow you to take my knapsack."

"Why not, if it fatigues you? What can it contain? It seems weighty. Judging from the metallic sound when you stumbled, it might be iron."

The old man started aside.

"Oh, no, you must be mistaken. It is filled with nothing but food and clothes. No, my lord, it does not fatigue me."

The young man's kind offer had evidently greatly disturbed his companion, who tried to hide his discomfiture.

"Very well; if you do not feel tired, keep it."

The old man was reassured, nevertheless he hastened to change the conversation.

"It is sad to pass the night as fugitives on a route which it would be delightful to explore by daylight.

"To the left, on the banks of the gulf, a quantity of Runic stones are to be found, on which, so tradition says, curious characters have been traced by gods and giants. Behind the rocks to our right are the salt marshes of Sciold, which doubtless communicate with the sea by a subterraneous canal. The curious fish called the lombric is found in them, which your humble guide discovered, feeds on sand.

"In the tower of Vyglä, which we are approaching, that glorious martyr Saint Etheldera was burnt alive by the pagan king, Vermond, on wood from the real cross, brought to Copenhagen by Olaus III., and taken from him by the King of Norway.

"Since then every effort has been made to convert this accursed tower into a chapel, but every cross that has been placed there has been consumed by fire from Heaven."

At that moment a deep flash lighted up the gulf, the hills, the rocks, and the tower, and disappeared before the travelers could see any of these objects.

They halted immediately, and the lightning was followed by a heavy clap of thunder, echoing from cloud to cloud in the heavens, and rock to rock upon earth.

All the stars had disappeared, dense clouds were rolling rapidly one over another, and the tempest seemed like an avalanche over their heads. The mighty wind which was forcing all these masses before it had not as yet disturbed the trees, nor had a single drop of rain fallen upon them. From on high was heard the rumblings of the storm.

These, with the rushing waters of the gulf, were the only sounds that could be heard in the gloom of the night, which was rendered more terrible by the darkness of the tempest.

This tumultuous silence was suddenly interrupted by a kind of roar, which made the elder traveler start with fright.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried he, grasping the young man's arm. "That is the Storm Fiend's laugh, or the voice of——"

Another flash of lightning, a fresh peal of thunder, cut short his words. The tempest burst forth with great violence, as though prompted by this signal. The travelers wrapped their cloaks around them, to protect themselves from the rain, which fell in torrents, and from the dust, which was driven up in clouds by the wind from the still dry earth.

"Old man," said the younger traveler, "that flash enables me to see that the tower of Vygla is to our right. Let us leave the road and seek shelter there."

"Shelter in that accursed tower!" cried the old man. "May Saint Hospice protect us. Only think, young master, that tower is deserted."

"So much the better; we shall not have to wait at the door."

"Think of the abominations which have defiled it."

"Well, by sheltering us it will be purified. Now come and follow me. I declare, on a night like this, I would try the hospitality of a robbers' den."

Notwithstanding the old man's remonstrances, he seized him by the arm, and made his way to the building, which the frequent flashes showed him was not far off. As they approached, they perceived a light in one of the loop-holes of the tower.

"You see," said the young man, "that this tower is not deserted. Now you are reassured, I hope."

"Great Heaven! master; where are we going? May Saint Hospice defend me from entering this devil's chapel!"

They had reached the foot of the tower, and the young man knocked boldly at the door newly made in this formidable ruin.

"Calm your fears, old man. Some pious hermit has sanctified this dwelling by taking up his residence here."

"No," answered his companion. "I will not enter

there. I can answer for it that no hermit could live here unless he wore Beelzebub's seven chains as a rosary."

However, the light was seen moving from loop-hole to loop-hole, until it shone through the keyhole of the door.

"You are late, Nychol," cried a shrill voice. "The gallows is erected at noon, and it only takes six hours to come from Skongen to Vygla. Has your work increased?"

This question was put as the door was opened. On perceiving two strangers instead of the person expected, the woman gave a cry of horror, mingled with threats, and drew back a step.

The woman's appearance was not very reassuring. She was tall, and the light of the lamp she carried threw a glare upon her livid features. Her face was something cadaverous, while from the hollows of her eyes darted sinister rays of light, like a funeral torch. Her scarlet petticoat, dyed in patches of deeper red, showed her bare feet beyond. Her withered form was partially covered by a man's vest, the sleeves of which were cut off at the elbow. The wind coming through the open door blew her long gray hair wildly about, regardless of the string slightly confining it, giving a fiercer look to the otherwise savage expression of her countenance.

"Good woman," said the younger traveler, "it rains in torrents; you have shelter and we have gold."

His companion pulled his cloak, and whispered:

"Oh, master! what are you saying? If this is not the devil's home, it is some bandit's retreat. Our gold, instead of being the means of our protection, will cause our destruction."

"Peace," said the other, drawing a purse from his pocket; and showing its shining contents to his hostess, he repeated his request.

The latter, who had recovered from her surprise, was scrutinizing the travelers with her haggard-looking eyes.

"Strangers," she at length exclaimed, paying no heed to the words, "your guardian angels must have forsaken you. What can you want in this accursed tower? Strangers, no man told you to seek shelter in these ruins, for one and all would have said, 'Better far the lightning and tempest than a refuge in the tower of Vygla. The only human being who enters has the entrance to no man's house; he quits his solitude only for a crowd, and lives but for death. Among mankind his name is never mentioned without a curse; he carries out their vengeance, and exists by their crimes. The vilest wretch at

the hour of his doom pours the universal contempt upon him, to which he considers himself entitled to add his own. You must be strangers, for you do not shrink with horror from the very threshold of this tower. Do not trouble the wolf and his cubs. Retrace your steps; and if you would not be shunned by your fellow-men, never say that the light has shone on your faces from the lamp belonging to the inhabitants of the tower of Vyglä."

Pointing to the door, she advanced toward the travelers. The old man trembled in every limb, and gave his young companion a supplicating look. The latter, who had little understood her words, owing to the tall woman's extreme volubility, thought she was mad; besides, he did not feel inclined to continue his journey in the rain, which still came down in torrents.

"Faith, our good hostess, that must be a strange person you spoke of, and I should be sorry to lose the opportunity of making his acquaintance."

"Young man, his acquaintance is soon made, and sooner ended. If the evil spirits prompt you, go murder a man or mutilate the dead."

"Mutilate a corpse," repeated the old man, in a quivering voice, and hiding himself behind his companion.

"I do not understand you," said the latter; "your ways, to say the least of it, are somewhat vague, and the most simple thing is to remain here. A man must be mad to continue his journey in such weather."

"Far more so to seek shelter in such a place," muttered the old man.

"Unhappy man," cried the woman, "do not rap at the house of him who only knows how to open the door of the sepulcher."

"Should it be my sepulcher, no one shall say that I drew back for a few threatening words. My sword shall be my safeguard. Come now, close the door, for the wind blows cold, and take this gold."

"Pray what should I do with your gold?" replied the hostess. "Precious in your hands, it would be but vile dross in mine. Very well, remain then for the sake of the gold. It can help to shelter you from the storm, but it cannot shield you from the contempt which men will afterward regard you. Remain. You give a higher price for hospitality than is paid for a murder. Wait for me here, and hand me your gold. This is the first time a man has entered here with his hands filled with gold unstained with blood."



Then placing her lamp aside, she bolted the door and disappeared under an arch made beneath a staircase at the end of the hall. While the old man trembled and invoked by every title the glorious Saint Hospice, roundly cursing under his breath his young companion's imprudence, the latter took the light and examined the circular chamber in which they found themselves. He could not help shuddering at the object fixed to the wall, and the old man, whose eyes watched every movement, exclaimed :

"Great Heaven ! master, a gallows."

It was in fact a large gibbet, which reached the center of the damp and lofty porch.

"Yes," said the young traveler, "and here are wooden and steel saws, chains, iron collars, a set of triangles, with heavy iron pincers hung over it.

"Holy Saints of Paradise ! where are we ?" exclaimed the old man.

His companion coolly continued his examination.

"Here is a roll of hempen cord, there furnaces and boilers ; this portion of the wall is covered with tongs and skinning knives, here are leather lashes tipped with steel, an ax, a mace——"

"Have we then come to hell's depository ?" cried the old man, terrified at this fearful enumeration.

"Here," continued the other, "are copper syphons, wheels with brass teeth, a chest of long nails, a screw-jack. It is indeed horrible furniture. Old man, I regret that my imprudence should have brought you here."

"Really, it is quite time you did."

Spiagudry was more dead than alive.

"Do not be afraid ; the place matters but little. I am here to protect you."

"A fine protector, indeed !" muttered the old guide, whose terror had weakened his respect and fear for his young companion ; "a saber of thirty inches against a thirty-foot gibbet."

The tall woman reappeared, and taking up the lamp, made a sign to the travelers to follow her. They cautiously ascended a narrow and broken staircase, made out of the thickness of the wall. Through each loop-hole the wind and rain came with a rush, threatening to extinguish the quivering flame of the lamp which the hostess tried to shield with her long and transparent hands. It was not without repeatedly tripping over loose stones, which the old man imagined were human bones scattered

about, that they reached the first floor of the tower, a circular room, similar to the one beneath it. In the center, according to the usual custom, burnt a large fire, the smoke from which spread its fumes around, escaping by a hole made in the ceiling. The flames and the lamp attracted the travelers toward the spot. Some fresh meat was twisting on a spit before the fire. The old man turned away in horror.

"It was in that execrable grate," said he, "that the limbs of a saint were burnt on the wood of the blessed cross."

A clumsy table stood a short distance from the fire. The hostess invited the travelers to be seated.

"Strangers," said she, placing the lamp down; "supper will shortly be ready, and my husband will doubtless soon be here, fearing lest the spirit of midnight should carry him off in passing near the accursed tower."

Orderer—for the reader has guessed that it was he and his guide, Benignus Spiagudry—was able to scrutinize his companion's strange disguise, a task which had taxed all the latter's ingenuity, in order to avoid recognition and capture. The poor fugitive had changed his suit of reindeer skin for a complete one of black cloth, a relic of the Slpadgest, which had formerly belonged to a celebrated Drontheim grammarian who in despair had drowned himself, because he was unable to find the reason Jupiter gave Jovis in the genitive case. His hazelwood clogs had been replaced by a pair of postilion's jack-boots, who had been crushed to death by falling under his horse. The old guardian's spindle-shanks would have been lost in these boots; but for the addition of many a wisp of hay, he could never have walked in them. The large wig, formerly belonging to a young French dandy, who had been assassinated by thieves at the gates of Drontheim, hid his baldness, and fell around his deformed shoulders. He had a patch on one eye, and, thanks to some rouge which he had found in an old maid's pocket, who had died for love, his pale and hollow cheeks were of an unusual color. The charm was increased by the rain spreading the rosy hue the whole length of his face. Before taking his seat, he carefully placed under him the package he had carried on his back, and wrapped himself in his old cloak; and while his companion's attention was riveted upon him, he appeared to be engrossed by the roast meat his hostess was attending to, and toward which

he from time to time cast looks of anxiety and horror, muttering :

"Human flesh—horrendas epulas. Cannibals! Moloch's supper. Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet. Where are we? Atreus—Druidess—Irmensul. The devil destroy Lycaon."

At length he exclaimed :

"Just Heaven! thanks be to Providence, I can see a tail."

Ordener, who had listened attentively, followed the train of his thoughts, and the idea made him smile.

"That tail is not very reassuring. It may belong to the devil."

Spiagudry paid no heed to his joke; his eyes were fixed upon the other end of the room. He trembled, and whispered :

"Master, look on that heap of straw in the shadow——"

"Well?" said Ordener.

"Three motionless and naked corpses—three children's bodies."

"Some one is knocking at the door," said the woman, who was crouching over the fire.

In fact loud and continued knocking could be heard even above the noise of the storm.

"It is he at last; it is Nychol," and taking up the lamp, the hostess went hurriedly down.

The travelers heard a confused sound of voices, in the midst of which the following words, distinct above the rest, made Spiagudry start with affright.

"Woman, silence! we will remain. The storm comes in without asking your leave."

Spiagudry crept close to Ordener.

"Master, master!" said he feebly, "woe be to us."

The sound of feet was heard on the stairs, and two men dressed as monks came into the room, followed by the terrified hostess.

One was of medium height, and wore the black coat and the closely cut hair of a Lutheran minister; the other was short, and was dressed as a hermit, with a rope girdle round his waist, and the hood drawn over his eyes, and only allowed his long black beard to be seen. His hands were entirely concealed beneath his large sleeves.

At the appearance of these two quiet-looking persons, Spiagudry, who had been alarmed at the voice of one of them, felt now reassured.

"Fear not, dear lady," said the minister. "Christian

priests return good for evil. Would they therefore injure those who would serve them? We humbly ask for shelter. If the reverend doctor who accompanies me spoke harshly just now, he was wrong; our vows enforce moderation of tone. Alas! the most devout are not infallible. I lost myself on my way from Skongen to Drontheim. I was without a guide, without shelter from the storm, when my reverend brother, who like myself had wandered far from home, allowed me to accompany him as far as here. He spoke in high terms of your kind hospitality, dear lady, and he was no doubt right. Do not say, like the bad shepherd, 'Advena cur intras!' Receive us, worthy hostess, and God will save your crops from the storm; God will find a shelter for your cattle during the tempest, as you have done for the lost travelers."

"Old man," interrupted the woman, angrily, "I have neither cattle nor crops."

"Well, if you are poor, Heaven will bless you before the rich. You and your husband, with increase of years, will gain the respect of all, not for your wealth, but for your virtues; your children will grow up esteemed by every one, and follow in their father's footsteps——"

"Silence!" cried the hostess. "It is by keeping our present position that our children, like ourselves, will be treated with the contempt of the world, which follows our race from generation to generation. Silence, again I say. Your blessing would only turn into a curse upon our heads."

"Oh, Heaven!" replied the minister; "who, then, are you? What crimes darken your life?"

"What are crimes? what are virtues? We are privileged people here; we possess no virtues, we commit no crimes."

"The woman is mad," said the minister, turning toward the little hermit, who was drying his rough cloth dress at the fire.

"No, priest," answered the woman; "you shall know where you are. I prefer horror to any show of pity. I am not mad, but the wife of——"

The rest of the sentence was lost, owing to violent knocking at the door, to the great disappointment of Spiagudry and Ordener, who had both been attentive listeners.

"Cursed be the high sheriff of Skongen," said the woman in red, "for assigning such a dwelling to us as

this tower by the wayside. Perhaps, again, this is not Nychol."

Nevertheless she took up the lamp.

"What matters, after all, if it is another guest? The brook can flow where the torrent has passed."

The four travelers now scrutinized each other. Spiagudry, who had been alarmed by the hermit's voice, and afterward reassured by seeing his black beard, would have trembled had he been aware of the piercing look the latter was casting at him beneath the folds of his hood. The minister broke the silence.

"Brother hermit, I presume you are a Catholic priest who escaped during the last persecution, and you are homeward bound when I was fortunate enough to meet you. Can you inform me where we are?"

The door opened before the hermit could reply.

"Woman, let a storm come, and many there are who are only too glad to find a place at our despised table, and to take shelter under our accursed roof."

"Nychol," replied the woman, "I could not prevent——"

"What care I as to the number of guests, provided they pay? Gold is equally well earned either in lodging a traveler or in strangling a brigand."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE LOVING CUP.

The speaker was standing at the door in full view of the travelers. He was a man of colossal proportions, dressed in red serge, similar to that worn by the hostess. His enormous head, sunk between his shoulders, contrasted with the long and angular neck of his gracious spouse. He had a low forehead, a flat nose, thick eyebrows, dark lines underneath the eyes, which shone forth with a blood-red light. His face, being clean shaved, showed a wide-spread mouth, with black lips parted into a hideous smile. Two tufts of bushy hair grew at each side of his face, extending to the bottom of the jaw, giving it a square-like form.

He wore a green felt hat, dripping with rain, which he had not even the courtesy to raise on seeing the travelers.

On perceiving him, Benignus Spiagudry uttered a terrified cry, while the Lutheran minister turned aside with surprise and horror, when the master of the house recognized him, thus addressing him:



"What! you here, your reverence? I never expected to be amused to-day by your piteous and frightened countenance."

The minister restrained his first feelings of repugnance, and assumed a grave and serene air.

"And I, my son, am glad that chance has brought the shepherd to the stray sheep, who will now take heed of the pastor."

"Ah! by Haman's gibbet!" replied the other, with a burst of laughter, "this is the first time I have heard myself compared to a sheep. Listen to me, father. If you would flatter the vulture, do not call him a pigeon."

"He who changes the vulture into the dove would console, my son, and not flatter you. You think I fear you, while I only pity you."

"You must have a large amount of pity. I should have thought you would have exhausted it all on that poor devil to-day to whom you showed the cross that you might the better hide the sight of my gibbet."

"That unfortunate man was less to be pitied than you are; for he wept, while you laughed. Happy is the man who in his last moments remembers that God's word is more powerful than the arm of man."

"Well said, father," replied the host, with horrible sardonic gayety. "Happy the man who weeps. Besides, our man to-day had committed no greater crime than that of loving the king so much that he could not live without putting his majesty's face on little copper medals, which he afterward gilded artistically, to render them more worthy of the royal effigy. Our gracious monarch has not been ungrateful, and, in recompense to him for so much love, he bestowed a fine hempen cord upon him, which, for the enlightenment of my worthy guests, I myself conferred on him to-day in the public square of Skongen, as grand chancellor of the order of the gibbet, assisted by you, grand chaplain of the same order——"

"Stay, unhappy man!" interrupted the minister. "Can he who punishes forget the penalty? Listen to the thunder——"

"Well, and what is thunder A peal of Satan's laughter."

"Great Heaven! He has just sent a man to his death, and he can blaspheme."

"A truce to your sermons, old idiot!" cried the host, in a threatening voice. "Unless you curse the angel of darkness, who has brought us together twice in twelve hours——"



once in a cart and once under this roof—imitate the silence of your comrade, the hermit, who anxiously hopes to return to his grotto at Lynraas. I must thank you, brother hermit, for the blessing you bestow on the accursed tower from your position on the hill. I thought you were very tall, and that black beard to me seemed to be white. You are certainly the hermit of Lynraas, are you not, the only hermit in the whole of the Drontheimhus?"

"Yes, I am the only one," was the reply, in muffled tones.

"We are, then," returned the host, "the two solitary beings of the province. Ho! Bechlie! hurry yourself with that quarter of lamb, for I am hungry. I was delayed in the village of Burlock by that cursed Doctor Manryll, who would only give me twelve ascalins for a body, while that infernal guardian of the Spladgest at Drontheim gets forty. Hulloo! you, sir, of the wig; what is the matter with you? You nearly fell backwards? I say, Bechlie, have you finished the skeleton of Orgivius, the poisoner and famous magician. It is time it was sent to the Berghen Museum. Have you sent one of your brats to the Syndic of Lœvig for what he owes me—four double crowns for having boiled a witch and two alchemists to death, and for removing several chains from his bench; twenty ascalins for taking down Ismael Typhaine, the Jew, from the gibbet, on the complaint of the bishop; a crown for putting a new wooden arm to the stone gallows of the village?"

"The money," replied the woman, in a shrill voice, "remained in the hands of the syndic because your son had forgotten to take a wooden spoon to receive it in; not one of the judge's servants would place it in his hand."

The husband frowned.

"Let their necks come within my grasp, and they shall see if I first wait for a wooden spoon to touch them. But we must keep in with the syndic; for it was to him that Ivar the robber sent in a petition, complaining that he was put to the torture, not by the usual official, but by myself; and, as he had not been convicted, he could not be considered infamous. By the way, wife, prevent your children from playing with my nippers and pincers.

"Where are the little monsters?" continued the host, approaching the straw on which Spiagudry thought he saw three dead bodies. "Here they are, sound asleep,

through all this noise, just as if they had been taken down from the gallows."

The reader doubtless can divine who inhabits the tower of Vyglå, from the horrible words just uttered with cool and insolent gayety. Spiagudry, who recognized the new-comer from the first, having seen him so often figure in the fearful ceremonies in Drontheim square, now was half-dead with fright, as he had personal motives for dreading this terrible person. In a scarcely articulate tone, he said to Ordener :

"This is Nychol Orugix, the headsman of the Drontheimhus."

Ordener started with horror, and regretted he had left the highway, with all its storm. He soon recovered himself, and his curiosity was aroused. Although he pitied his old guide's terror and embarrassment, he gave his whole attention to the words and ways of the singular being who had last entered, as we should listen to the hyena howling and the lion's roar, when brought from the desert into our cities. Poor Benignus was far too confused to make any psychological observations, and more intent on hiding himself behind Ordener, and drawing his cloak and wig well over him.

The hostess had served up the roast quarter of lamb, deprived of its reassuring tail, on a large earthenware dish. The executioner seated himself between the two priests, facing Ordener and Spiagudry, while his wife, after placing a jug of beer sweetened with honey, a piece of rendebrod (bread eaten by the poorer class in Norway), and five wooden platters, on the table, took a chair before the fire, and occupied herself in clearing off the notches from her husband's pincers.

"There, your reverence," said Orugix, laughing, "the sheep offers you some lamb. And you, Sir Knight of the Wig, has the wind driven your hair so far over your face?"

"The wind—the storm," whimpered the trembling Spiagudry.

"Come, pluck up courage, old one. You see the holy priests and I are good friends. Tell us who you and your taciturn young friend are. Talk a bit. Let us make acquaintance; for if your speech is anything like your appearance, it will be comical enough."

"You are jocular, master," said the guardian, contracting his lips, grinning, and winking his eye, with an attempt at mirth. "I am only a poor old——"

"Yes," interrupted the jovial headsman, "some old wiseacre, some old wizard——"

"Oh, master, I am a scholar, but no sorcerer."

"So much the worse. A sorcerer would complete our merry sanhedrim. My noble guests, let us drink. This old scholar may then find words to enliven our supper. To the health of the man hung to-day, brother preacher. Well, father hermit, so you refuse my beer?"

The hermit had drawn from beneath his frock a large gourd full of clear water, with which he filled his glass.

"Well, forsooth, hermit of Lynraas," exclaimed the headsman; "if you will not taste my beer, I should like some of that water you seem to prefer."

"Be it so," replied the hermit.

"Take off your glove, reverend brother; you must pour the drink out with a bare hand."

The hermit shook his head.

"I am bound by a vow," said he.

"Pour away, then," cried the executioner.

Orugix had scarcely touched the glass with his lips when he quickly put it down. The hermit had emptied his at one draught.

"By all the powers, reverend hermit, what queer liquor is this? I never tasted any like it since the day I was nearly drowned in crossing from Copenhagen to Drontheim. This is no water from Lynraas, but from the sea itself."

"Sea-water!" repeated Spiagudry, terrified no less at this than at sight of the hermit's gloves.

"What now?" cried the hangman, laughing; "everything seems to alarm you, old Absalom, even to the drink which a holy monk takes to mortify the flesh."

"Alas! no, master! but sea-water—there is only one man——"

"Come, doctor, you do not know what you are saying. Your uneasiness among us either springs from a guilty conscience or contempt."

These words were pronounced in such a tone that Spiagudry felt the necessity of dissimulating his terror, and using all the presence of mind he possessed by having recourse to the vast stores of his memory.

"Contempt! I feel contempt for you, my noble master! for you, whose presence in a province gives it the right of *merum imperium*, or right of blood! for you, the master of high justice, the executioner of the public prosecutor, weapon of justice, shield of innocence! you, whom Aris-

totle, Book Six, last chapter on Politics, classed among the magistrates, and whom Paris of Puteo, in his treatise de Syndico, fixes the emoluments at five golden crowns, *quinque aureos manivollo*! for you, whose brother headsman at Cronstadt acquires a patent of nobility, after serving three hundred heads! for you, whose terrible but honorable functions are proudly filled by the youngest married man in Franconia, by the most junior counsel at Rentlinger, by the last citizen installed at Stedien. Do I not also know, my good master, that your brotherhood in France have the right of havadium on each patient of Saint Ladre Hospital, on the pigs and cakes on the eve of the Epiphany? How could I have no respect for you, when the Abbot of St. Germain des Pres gives you each year, at the feast of St. Vincent, a pig's head, and places you in front of the procession——"

"This is the first time I have heard of it. The learned abbot you mentioned has up to the present defrauded me of all those fine privileges you have just pictured in so enticing a manner. Sir strangers," continued Orugix, "apart from this old idiot's extravagant nonsense, it is true that I have missed my career. I am but the poor executioner of a paltry province. Why, I ought to be in a better position than Stillison Deckoy, the famous headsman of Moscovy. Would you believe that I am the same man who twenty-four years ago was appointed to behead Schumacker?"

"Schumacker, the Count of Griffenfeld!" exclaimed Ordener.

"That astonishes you, Sir Mute. Yes, the same Schumacker, whom chance may replace in my hands, should the king revoke his reprieve. Let us empty the pitcher, gentlemen, and I will relate to you how it is that with such a brilliant opening I have sunk to such a miserable position.

"In the year 1676 I was assistant to Rhum Stuald, the royal headsman of Copenhagen, at the time of Count Griffenfeld's condemnation. My master was taken ill, and I was, thanks to the interest I possessed, chosen to replace him for this famous execution. The 5th of June—I shall never forget the day—at five in the morning I began to work. With the help of the carpenter of scaffolds, we erected an immense one in the Citadel Square, and draped it with black, out of respect for the rank of the condemned man. At eight a guard of the King's Own surrounded the scaffold; the Slesvig Hulano kept back

the crowd. Who in my place would not have been intoxicated with his position? All eyes were fixed upon me as I stood on the platform, my ax in hand, for at that moment I was the most important person in the two kingdoms. My fortune was made; for these great lords who compassed the chancellor's destruction, what could they do without me? I could see myself appointed royal executioner to the capital, with assistants, and many other privileges.

"Listen. The clock struck ten. The condemned man left his prison, crossed the square, and calmly mounted the scaffold with a firm step. I wished to bind his hair, but he performed this last service for himself. 'For a long time,' said he, with a smile, to the prior of Saint Andrew, 'I have been my own valet.' I was about to use the black bandage for his eyes, but he disdainfully declined it, evincing, however, no contempt toward myself. 'My friend,' said he, 'this is perhaps the first time that only a few feet separates the two extreme officers of the secular arm—the chancellor and the headsman.' Those words have been engraven on my memory. He also refused the black cushion I offered him for his knees, embraced the chaplain, and, declaring his innocence, knelt down. With one blow I shattered the shield of his armorial bearings, exclaiming, according to custom, 'This is not done without good reason.' This insult shook the count's firmness: he turned pale, but he hastened to say, 'The king gave; the king can take away.' He placed his head upon the block, and turned his eyes to the east. I raised my ax with both hands. Listen. Suddenly there came a cry; 'Pardon in the name of the king! pardon for Schmacker!' I turned round, and saw an aide-de-camp galloping toward the scaffold, waving a parchment. The count rose—not joyously, but with an air of contentment. The parchment was handed to him.

"'Just Heaven!' cried he, 'imprisonment for life. Their mercy is harder to bear than death.' He came down, crest-fallen like a thief, from the scaffold he had mounted so firmly. For myself it was another matter—the safety of this man was my fall. After taking down the scaffold, I returned to my master. I was still full of hope, although slightly disappointed at losing a golden crown, the fee for each head. This was not all. The following day I received my appointment as headsman of the Drontheimhus, executioner of the least important province in Norway. It only shows, gentlemen, how little matters



lead to great events. The count's enemies, wistful to have the credit for clemency, had so arranged for the reprieve to arrive immediately after the execution. The minute made all the difference, and I was blamed for my slowness, as if I could hurry the last moments of an illustrious person by preventing him from amusing himself. As if a royal executioner could behead a grand chancellor with as little ceremony as a provincial headsman would a Jew. There was ill feeling in all this. I had a brother, and I believe he still exists, who by changing his name had succeeded in getting into service at the grand chancellor's, Count d'Ahlefeld. My presence at Copenhagen annoyed this pitiful fellow. My brother despises me. I shall perhaps hang him some day."

The headsman paused, overcome with laughter; and then continued:

"You see, my dear guests, that I have taken my own course, and cast ambition to the winds. I honestly act up to my business. I sell bodies, or Bechlie makes skeletons of them, and they are purchased by the School of Anatomy, at Berghen. I laugh at everything, even at this poor female. She was a gipsy, but solitude has driven her mad. My three heirs grow up in fear of the devil or the gallows. My name is held in terror by the smallest children of the Drontheimhus. The syndics furnish me with a cart and my red clothes. The accursed tower keeps out the rain as well as any bishop's palace. Old priests, driven by the storm to my roof, preach to me, and scholars flatter me. In fact I am as happy as another. I drink, I eat, I hang, I sleep."

"Wretched man!" murmured the priest; "he kills, and he sleeps."

"How happy he is!" exclaimed the hermit.

"Yes, brother hermit," said the executioner; "a wretched man, like yourself, but certainly far more happy. My business would be good enough if they would not interfere with its privileges. Would you credit it? the newly appointed chaplain at Drontheim, under pretext of a certain illustrious marriage about to take place, has petitioned for the pardon of twelve criminals, who virtually belong to me."

"Who belong to you?" exclaimed the minister.

"Certainly, reverend sir. Seven of them were to be flogged, two branded on the left cheek, and three to be hung, which make twelve in all. If pardon is granted to them, I shall be the loser of twelve crowns and thirty



ascalins. What do you think, sir stranger, of a chaplain who thus disposes of my emoluments? This confounded priest's name is Athanasius Munder. Oh! if he were only within my grasp."

The minister rose, and in a calm voice said :

"My son, I am Athanasius Munder."

At these words Orugix started from his seat with rage ; but the chaplain's kind and noble glance beamed upon him, and he sat down, silent and confused. Ordener, who had risen from the table, ready to defend the priest, was the first to break the silence.

"Nychol Orugix," said he, "here are thirteen crowns to compensate you for the pardon of these condemned men."

"Alas!" interrupted the minister, "who knows whether I shall obtain their pardon? If I could only see the vice-roy's son ; for it entirely depends upon his marriage with the chancellor's daughter."

"Reverend sir," replied the young man, in a firm voice, "you will obtain it, for Ordener Guldenlew will not accept the nuptial ring until your proteges' chains have been removed."

"Young stranger, you can do nothing, but God will reward you for these words."

However, Ordener's thirteen crowns and the minister's kindly glance, had quite restored Orugix's usual gayety.

"There, good chaplain, you are a brave man, worthy of serving in the chapel of Saint Hilarion. I said more against you than I really thought. You walk straight in your own path, and it is no fault of yours if it crosses mine. The man I want to grasp is the guardian of the dead at Drontheim, that old magician—the keeper of the Spladgest. What is his name? Splingry—Spiadugry? Here, tell me, you old Doctor Babel of science, you who seem to know all, could you not help me to find this brother sorcerer? You must have met him sometimes on festival days prancing in the air astride on a broomstick."

If at that moment poor Benignus could have fled into the air on something of the kind, he would joyfully have confided his terror-stricken self to this mode of egress. He was terrified at all his surroundings—the souvenirs of the accursed tower, the red woman's haggard face, the voice, the gloves, and the mysterious hermit's drink, the adventurous spirit of his young companion, but, above all, the executioner, beneath whose roof he had sought shelter. He had lost all control, and could do nothing but tremble. When questioned by the formidable Oru-

gix, he was by no means anxious to imitate the priest's heroism.

"Well," continued the hangman, "cannot you tell me his name? Does your wig deafen you?"

"A little, my lord." But he managed to add: "I swear I do not know his name."

"He does not know it," said the voice of the hermit. "He is wrong to swear. That man's name is Benignus Spiagudry."

"I! great heavens!" cried the terrified old man.

The headsman burst into a laugh.

"Who said it was you? We are speaking of that pagan of a guardian. Why, this pedagogue alarms himself for nothing. If all his queer grimaces were made from some grave cause! The old idiot would be amusing to hang. And so, my venerable doctor," added the executioner, delighted with Spiagudry's fright, "you do not know this Benignus Spiagudry?"

"No, master," said the guardian, reassured somewhat at the thought of his incognito; "I am not in the least acquainted with him. Since he has had the misfortune to displease you, I should be truly sorry ever to meet him."

"You seem to know him, friend hermit?"

"Yes, certainly," replied the monk. "He is tall, old, thin, bald——"

Spiagudry, now rightly alarmed, hurriedly readjusted his wig.

"He has hungry looking hands," added the hermit, "like those of a thief who has not met with a traveler for a week. His back is bent."

Spiagudry did his best to straighten himself.

"Besides, he could well be mistaken for one of the bodies under his charge, if his eyes had not that piercing look."

Spiagudry gave a touch to his protecting patch.

"Thanks, father," said the hangman. "I shall now be able to recognize the old Jew."

Spiagudry, who was a good Christian, felt himself insulted, and he could not repress an exclamation.

"Jew! master!" and then stopped short, fearing to have said too much.

"Jew or infidel, what matters, if he is in league with the devil, as report says?"

"I should readily believe it," answered the hermit, with a diabolical smile, which his hood could not entirely conceal, "if he were not such a coward. How could he make

such a compact with Satan? He is as cowardly as he is wicked. When fear gets the better of him, he does not know himself."

The hermit spoke in slow and measured tones, which gave singular force to his words.

"He does not know himself!" inwardly repeated Spiagudry.

"I am sorry to hear a wicked man is a coward," said the headsman. "He is hardly worth the trouble of hating. You must fight a serpent; you can but crush a lizard."

Spiagudry ventured a few words in his own defense.

"But, gentlemen, are you sure that this public functionary is quite what you depict him? Has he then a reputation——"

"Reputation!" exclaimed the hermit; "the worst in the province."

Disappointed in this quarter, Benignus turned to the executioner.

"Master, what wrong has he done you? Your hatred has doubtless some foundation."

"You are right. Spiagudry's business is something like mine, and he does all that he can to injure me."

"Oh, master, do not believe it. If this be the case, this man cannot have seen you, as I have, in the midst of your wife and charming children, welcoming the stranger to your hospitable board. Had he done so, he could never have been your enemy."

Spiagudry had scarcely finished this flattering speech, than the woman, who until then had kept silence, exclaimed, in a bitter tone:

"The sting of the viper is never more venomous than when it is mingled with honey."

She turned again to her work; the crackling and harsh sound of the pincers filled up the intervals, as a chorus does in a Greek tragedy.

"This woman is really mad," muttered the guardian to himself, the only way he could account for the failure of his flattering speech.

"Bechlie is right, Doctor Fair Locks," cried the hangman. "I shall look upon you as a viper if you persist in defending this Spiagudry."

"Heaven help me, master! I wish in no way to defend him."

"That is all right, for you do not know how far his

impudence leads him. Will you credit it, he has dared to dispute my right to Han of Iceland?"

"Han of Iceland!" repeated the hermit.

"Yes; you have heard of that famous brigand?"

"I have," replied the hermit.

"Well, every brigand belongs to the hangman. What does this confounded Spiagudry do but petition that a price should be set on Han's head?"

"He asked for a price to be set on Han's head!" exclaimed the hermit.

"He had that audacity, simply to claim the body as his property, and to do me out of my rights."

"This is infamous, Master Orugix, daring to dispute a privilege which evidently belongs to you," said the hermit, with that smile so terrifying to Spiagudry.

"The trick is still more shabby from the fact that it would take the execution of such a man as Han to bring me into notice and make my fortune, which I lost by Schumacker's escape."

"Certainly, Master Nychol."

"Brother hermit, come and see me on the day of Han's arrest, and we will kill a fatted pig, to the success of my future honors."

"Willingly; but I may not be free on that day; besides, just now you sent ambition to the winds."

"So I did, father, when all my hopes were crushed by a Spiagudry and his petition."

"Ah!" replied the hermit in a strange voice. "So Spiagudry petitioned for a price to be set on Han's head."

This voice affected the old man as a snake charms a bird.

"Gentlemen," said he, "why judge so hastily? This may only be a false report."

"A false report!" exclaimed Orugix; it is only too true. The petition, signed by Spiagudry, and countersigned by the syndic, is now awaiting at Drontheim for the governor's decision."

The executioner was so well informed that Spiagudry was afraid to go further. He contented himself by inwardly cursing his young companion. Imagine the state of his mind when the hermit said, in a jeering tone:

"Master Nychol, what is the punishment for sacrilege?"

At these words Spiagudry felt as though his patch and wig had been dragged off. He anxiously listened for Orugix's reply, who delayed doing so until he had emptied his glass.

"That depends upon the nature of the sacrilege."

"Should it consist in the mutilation of the dead?"

Benignus expected at every moment the strange hermit would pronounce his name.

"Formerly," answered Orugix, coldly, "they buried the criminal alive with the body. Now the punishment is milder."

"Milder?" said Spiagudry, scarcely breathing.

"Yes," answered the executioner, with the satisfied air of an artist who knows his work. "First an **S** is branded with a hot iron on the fleshy part of his legs."

"What follows?" interrupted the guardian, painfully uttering the words.

"Then they content themselves with hanging him."

"Mercy upon us!" cried the old man "they hang him."

"Why, what is the matter with you? You look at me as a criminal does the gibbet."

"I am pleased to hear," said the hermit, "that people are now guided by principles of humanity."

The storm had now lulled, and the distinct sound of a horn could be heard from without.

"Nychol," said the woman, "they are in pursuit of some criminal. That is the archers' horn."

"The archers' horn!" repeated all the guests, with different accents. Spiagudry's bespoke extreme terror.

A knock at the door put an end to these exclamations.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### GREEK MEETS GREEK.

Loevig is a large town situated to the north of Drontheim Gulf, and backed by a chain of hills, whose varied culture gave them the appearance of mosaics studded in the horizon. The place wore a dull aspect. The fishermen's cabins, built of wood and reeds; the conical huts of earth and flint, where the invalid miner retires, as soon as his savings permit, to end his days in sunshine and repose; the frail dwelling of the chamois hunter, who on his return thatches the roof and covers the walls with the skins of animals, line the streets, which, from their little breadth and windings, are longer than the town itself. In a part of the town, where little is to be seen but the ruins of a large tower, formerly the ancient



fortress built by Horda the Archer, Lord of Lœvig, brother-in-arms of the pagan King Halfdan, and occupied in 1698 by the syndic of the town, who was better accommodated than any one else, unless it were the white swan which came every summer and perched itself on the summit of the church belfry, having all the appearance of the white pearl placed at the extreme point of a mandarin's hat.

On the morning of the same day on which Ordener arrived at Drontheim, a person, likewise incognito, had landed at Lœvig. His gilded litter, though no arms were quartered, his four tall lackeys, armed to the teeth, had roused the curiosity of all parties, and made him the topic of conversation. The host of the Golden Gull, the small tavern where this mighty person had alighted, assumed a mysterious air, and gave the same answer to every question; "I do not know," with a manner implying, "I know all, but you shall learn nothing." The tall lackeys were as mute as fish, and kept things as dark as the entrance of a mine. The syndic at first shut himself up in his tower, and awaited a visit from the stranger; but soon, to the surprise of the inhabitants, he twice called fruitlessly at the Golden Gull, and lingered about the windows in hopes of a bow from the stranger. The gossips at once inferred that the visitor had made his rank known to the syndic. But they were mistaken. A messenger had called at the syndic's, requesting him to affix his signature to the stranger's free pass. The syndic noticed that the green wax with which the packet was sealed was stamped with this device, two hands of justice crossed, supporting a mantle of ermine, with the coronet of a count surmounting a shield, around which were the collars of the Elephant and the Dannebrog. The official dignitary was anxious to obtain the post of High Sheriff of the Dronthemhus, and determined to make the best of every chance. His advances met with no response, for the illustrious unknown would receive no one.

The second day of the traveler's arrival had nearly drawn to its close, when the host entered with a profound bow, saying that the messenger expected by his courtesy had arrived.

"Show him up, then," said his courtesy.

A moment afterward the messenger entered, carefully closed the door, then bowing nearly to the ground, he waited in respectful silence until he should be addressed.

"I expected you this morning. What detained you?"



"Your grace's intersts. Have I any other care?"

"What are Elphege and Frederic doing?"

"They are very well."

"There, that will do," interrupted his master. "Have you nothing more interesting to impart to me. Is there anything new at Drontheim?"

"Nothing; except the Baron of Thorwick's arrival."

"Yes, I know that he wished to consult that old Mecklenberger, Levin de Knud, on this projected marriage. Can you tell me the result of his interview with the governor?"

"At midday, when I left, he had not been near the general."

"You surprise me, Musdœmon. Why, he arrived the evening before. Has he seen the countess?"

"No, my lord."

"You then must have come across him?"

"I should not know him if I did."

"How did you learn he was at Drontheim, if no one saw him?"

"From his servant, who came on to the governor's palace."

"Where did he then dismount?"

"His servant said that his master at once left for Munckholm, after going into the Spladgest."

"For Munckholm. For Schumacker's prison. Are you certain?" exclaimed the count, angrily. "I always considered that honest Levin was a traitor. For Munckholm! What can be the attraction there? Did he go to consult Schumacker? Did he——"

"My noble lord," interrupted Musdœmon, "there is no certainty that he went there at all."

"What? Well, then, what have you been saying? Do you presume to joke with me?"

"Pardon, your grace, I simply repeated the words of the baron's servant. Lord Frederic, who was on guard yesterday at the fortress, asserts that he did not see the Baron Ordener."

"A convincing proof, indeed. My son does not know the viceroy's son. Ordener might have gone incognito."

"Yes, my lord; but Lord Frederic denies that any one entered."

The count grew calmer.

"That is different. My son asserts this, does he?"

"He assured me the same thing three times, and

Lord Frederic's interests are identical with those of your grace."

This remark completely allayed the count's anxiety.

"Ah!" said he, "I understand. The baron on arriving fancied a sail on the gulf, and his servant jumped to the conclusion that he had gone to Munckholm. Besides, what could he want there? I alarmed myself needlessly. This carelessness about seeing old Levin proves that my son-in-law's affection for him is not so great as I imagined. You will scarcely believe it, my dear Musdœmon," continued the count, with a smile, "that I already fancied Ordener was in love with Ethel Schumacker, and I at once built quite a romantic intrigue upon this trip to Munckholm. But thank, Heaven! Ordener is not so foolish as I am. With regard to this young Danae, how does Frederic get on with her?"

Musdœmon had conceived the same idea as his master concerning Ethel Schumacker, and he had not succeeded in setting it aside so easily. However, he was delighted to see his master smile, and he took great care not to disturb his serenity; on the contrary, he tried to better this feeling. Good-humor of the great is a boon to their favorites.

"Noble count, your son has failed with Schumacker's daughter, but it appears that another has been more fortunate."

The count hastily interrupted him.

"Another? what other?"

"Some serf, peasant, or vassal."

"Are you sure of this?" exclaimed the count, whose hard and gloomy face was now radiant.

"Both Lord Frederic and the countess affirmed it."

The count walked about the room rubbing his hands.

"Musdœmon, my dear Musdœmon, one more effort, and we shall accomplish our end. The shoot of the tree withered, we have but to overthrow the trunk. Have you any more good news?"

"Dispolsen has been murdered."

The count seemed utterly relieved.

"Ah, with us now one triumph will succeed another. Have they his papers? and, above all, did they find this iron casket?"

"I regret to say, your grace, that the murder was not committed by any of our people. He was assassinated and robbed on Urchtal Sands, and the crime is attributed to Han of Iceland."

"Han of Iceland" replied his master, whose countenance again became overcast. "What, that famous brigand that we are anxious to place at the head of the insurgents?"

"Himself, noble count; and from what I have heard we shall have some trouble to find him. In any case, I have found a man who will take his post, and also his name. He is a savage mountaineer, tall and strong as an oak, fierce and bold as a wolf in the snowy desert. It is impossible that so formidable a giant should not resemble Han of Iceland."

"This Han of Iceland, is he then very tall?"

"That is the popular belief, your grace."

"I can but always admire my dear Musdœmon, the art you display in making your plans. When will the insurrection burst forth?"

"Oh, at any moment, your grace. The royal tax has long displeased the miners, and they are eager for revolt. The first rise will be at Guldbranshal, will extend to Sund-Moer, thence to Königsberg. In three days two thousand miners can be assembled; then the name of Schumacker will be their watchword; our emissaries have freely made known the same. The reserve forces from the south and the garrisons of Drontheim and Skongen will march forward. With their help you can readily quell this rebellion. The king will be grateful to you for this new and distinguished service, and for ridding him of this Schumacker, who is a constant source of anxiety to his majesty. This is the firm basis on which the whole structure is raised, which is to be completed by the marriage of the noble Lady Ulrica with the Baron of Thorwick."

When two rascals hold any private conversation, it is never of long duration, because there is just enough manhood left to recoil from each other's villainy. Corrupted minds, when laid bare, themselves, revolt at the hideous spectacle. Crime shocks crime. When two evil spirits mutually confide their passions, their pleasures, and their interests, each one sees his own reflection, as it were, in a mirror. Their baseness humiliates them; every frightful coincidence finds an echo which never ceases to ring in their ears. However secret their interview may be, there are always two witnesses—God and conscience.

The count dreaded these interviews with Musdœmon, because the latter never spared his master—he made him a party in every crime and every enterprise. Courtiers spare their rulers even the appearance of evil by taking all on themselves, leaving to the great man the semblance

of ignorance of a crime profitable to himself. Musdœmon, however, acted quite in a contrary way. He apparently rarely counselled his master, and always obeyed him. He knew the inmost depths of his master's soul, and the count knew his, and if compromised both should share in the blame. The head the count would most gladly have seen fall after Schumacker's would have been Musdœmon's. The latter was well aware of this, and his master knew the fact.

The count was satisfied with the latest information, and it only remained for him to dismiss his ally.

"MUSDœMON," said he, with a gracious smile, "you are the most faithful and zealous of servants. All goes well, thanks to your care. I appoint you private secretary to the Grand Chancery division."

MUSDœMON bowed profoundly.

"This is not all," continued the count. "I am going, for the third time, to ask for the Order of the Dannebrog for you; but I am afraid your mean birth, your low relationship——"

MUSDœMON flushed, then turned pale, and bowed again profoundly to hide his discomfiture.

"Go then," said the count, presenting him his hand to kiss, "go, master private secretary, and write out your petition. The king may this time be in a humor to receive it."

"Whether his majesty grant it or not, I feel most honored by your grace's bounties."

"That will do, for I am anxious to leave. You must try to obtain more precise information about Han of Iceland."

MUSDœMON, after a third bow, half-opened the door.

"Ah, I was forgetting," said the count. "In your new position as private secretary, write to the grand chancery court, in order that the syndic of Lœvig may be dismissed from his post, for compromising his rank by cringing before strangers with whose position he is unacquainted."

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE CHAPLAIN'S FREE PASS.

"Yes, master, we certainly ought to make a pilgrimage to Lynraas Grotto. Could one have credited that the hermit I was cursing as an evil spirit would be our guardian angel, and that the lance which seemed to threaten our

lives would serve as a bridge to carry us across the precipice?"

Benignus Spiagudry gave vent to his joy in these highly colored terms of gratitude and admiration for the mysterious hermit.

Our travelers had left the accursed tower, and had advanced some distance from the village of Vygla. The difficulties of their steep and marshy way had been increased by heavy stones which the torrents had sent down from the hills. The day had not yet dawned, but the bushes which crowned the rocks on each side of the way seemed dark objects cut in the sky, whose grayish hue pierces the bleak fogs of a northern morning.

Ordener was silent. He was in that drowsy state which sometimes comes over pedestrians. He had not slept since the evening before, when he had taken a few hours' rest on a fisherman's bark on leaving the Spladgest for Drontheim. He was journeying to Skongen, but his thoughts had fled across the Gulf of Drontheim to that dark prison whose gloomy towers contained the only being in whom was centered all his hopes of happiness. Ethel's face was ever before him, waking and in dreams. He was now in a second kind of sleep, when all that is earthly seems to vanish, and his well-beloved was no less beautiful and pure, but free, happy, and more his own.

On the road to Skongen this complete forgetfulness of self was not possible, for his steps were impeded from time to time by a quagmire, a stone, or a broken branch, recalling him from the ideal to the realities of life. Then he would half-open his weary eyes, and regret to set aside the heavenly journey for a toil over miserable roads, with nothing to console him for fancies past but the tress of Ethel's hair, resting near his heart, there to remain until he could claim her as his bride.

"Master," cried Spiagudry, in a loud voice, which, coupled with stumbling over the trunk of a fallen tree, roused Ordener, "fear nothing; the archers, under the hermit's guidance, have gone forward to the right, and we are not within ear-shot. Silence until now has really been imperative."

"Indeed," said Ordener, yawning, "you carry prudence rather far. It is at least three hours since we left the tower and the archers."

"That is true, master; but prudence hurts no one. What would have become of me if I had answered the chief of that infernal band by saying, 'I am Benignus Spiagu-



dry?" His voice was like that of Satan, demanding his new-born son in order to devour him."

"By my faith, old man, I do not think at that moment it was possible for any one to make you give up your name, even had they employed red-hot pincers."

"Was I wrong, master? Had I spoken, the hermit—may Saint Hospice and the Saint Solitary bless him—would not have had the time to ask the chief of the archers if his escort were not part of the Munckholm garrison, a trivial question, only to gain time. Did you notice with what a curious smile the hermit accepted the archer's sleepy reply, and invited them to follow him, saying he knew the fugitive Benignus Spiagudry's place of concealment?"

The guardian again burst forth with increased enthusiasm:

"Good priest, worthy anchorite, practicing the principles of humanity and evangelical charity. And to think I was at first alarmed at his appearance, somewhat sinister certainly, when it concealed a heart so kind. Did you notice anything singular in the way he said to me on leaving with the archers, 'We shall meet again?' Solitude may give a strange ring to the voice, for, my lord," here Benignus almost whispered, "I know another solitary creature, that formidable being—— But no, out of respect to that venerable hermit of Lynraas, I will draw no odious comparisons. His gloves—well, there is nothing extraordinary in wearing them when the weather is cold. His sea-water draught—I need not be astonished at that, for Catholic recluses have often singular rules, according to the celebrated verses of Urensus, the hermit of the Caucasus: 'Rivos despiciens, maris undam potat amaram.' I wish these lines had recurred to me in that horrible ruin of Vyglä; I might have spared myself many false alarms. But who could collect his thoughts when seated at the hangman's board?—a creature held up to general execration, who only differs from the assassin by the frequency of his murders and his impunity from all consequences, combining all the atrocities of the brigand, without the bravery which the latter must display in his adventurous career; a being who offers you food and drink with the same hand with which he uses instruments of torture, and crushes the bones of his wretched victims between the thumbscrews and the boot. The vilest mendicant throws aside his rags with horror, if they have been defiled by this impure contact. When the chancellor



signs his appointment, he flings it under the table in token of disgust. In France, should an executioner die, the sergeant of the provost would rather pay a fine of forty pounds than succeed him. At Pesth the condemned criminal Chorchill, when offered his pardon, with post of executioner, chose to be the victim in preference to being the hangman. Turmeryn, Bishop of Maestricht, ordered a church to be purified because the headsman had entered it. Czarina Petrovna washed her face after each time she was compelled to witness an execution. The kings of France never degraded their soldiers, however criminal, by condemning them to be put to death by the executioner. Does not Charon say, according to Melasius Sturnham's 'Descent of Saint George into Hades,' that the brigand Robin Hood was the superior to Phlipcrass the headsman? Truly, master, if ever I come into power, I will suppress that functionary and re-establish fines."

"Do I not hear the tramp of a horse behind us?" said Ordener.

They turned round, and as it was now break of day, they could distinguish, about a hundred yards distant, a horseman, clothed in black, mounted on a small Norwegian pony, who was waving his hand to them.

"For Heaven's sake, master!" said the timid Spiagudry, "let us pass on. This man has all the air of an archer."

"What! there are two of us, and would you have us fly before one man?"

"Alas! twenty sparrow-hawks fly before one owl. Where is the glory of waiting to be overtaken by an officer of justice?"

"And who says he is one?" said Ordener, fearlessly. "Reassure yourself, my bold guide; I can see who it is. Let us stop."

Spiagudry had to yield, and ceased to tremble upon recognizing the calm, grave face of Athanasius Munder.

The minister greeted them with a smile, drew up, and said, in a panting tone:

"My dear children, I have retraced my steps on your account, and Heaven will no doubt prevent my absence, as it is with a good intent, from being prejudicial to those who require my aid."

"Reverend sir," answered Ordener, "we shall be happy to be of service to you."

"It is I, on the contrary, young man, who would serve you. Would you inform me of the object of your journey?"

"Reverend chaplain, I cannot do so."

"I hope, my son, your denial means want of power, and not distrust. Unhappy the man who is open to suspicion from his brethren when seen but once."

Orderer was deeply moved by the humility and impressiveness with which the minister spoke.

"All I can tell you, my father, is that we are going to the northern mountains."

"That idea made me follow you. In those mountains there are bands of miners and hunters, a source of great danger to travelers."

"Well, and if so?" said Orderer.

"Well, I know it is useless to try and turn a young man from a dangerous course, but my esteem for you has suggested to me that I may be of some service to you. The false coiner to whom I offered yesterday the last consolation had been a miner. He gave me a parchment on which his name was written, saying, this pass would be a safe conduct throughout the mountains. Alas! what use can this be to a poor priest who will live and die with prisoners? besides, *inter castra latronum*, one whose only defense should be found in patient prayers, Heaven's only weapons. I accepted the pass, as it is not right to wound a man who in a few short moments will neither give nor receive. May the gift of the dying be a blessing to the living.

Orderer received the old priest's present with much emotion.

"Reverend chaplain," said he, "may Heaven listen to your prayers. I heartily thank you; but," added he, grasping the hilt of his sword, "I carry my free pass here."

"Young man," answered the priest, "perhaps this scrap of paper will protect you better than your steel weapon. A penitent's last look is of more avail than the archangel's sword. Adieu; my prisoners are waiting for me. Pray for them and for me."

"Holy priest," returned Orderer, smiling, "rest assured your prisoners shall be pardoned, as I have already told you."

"Oh, my son, pray do not speak so positively. Do not tempt Providence. A man can never know another's inmost thoughts, and you cannot tell what may be the decision of the viceroy's son. Alas! he would never give admittance to an humble chaplain. Adieu, my son; may blessings attend your journey, and may you sometimes

give a thought to the poor priest, and offer up a prayer for the wretched prisoners."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

In 1675, twenty-four years before the commencement of this history, a charming festival took place in the village of Thoctree, on the occasion of the gentle Lucy Pelnryh's marriage with tall and handsome Caroll Stadt. They had loved each other for a long time, and who could fail to be interested in two such ardent lovers, whose hopes of happiness were about to be realized? Born in the same village, working together in the same fields, often Caroll in his childhood had fallen asleep and rested his head on Lucy's shoulder. When they grew older, on returning from work, Lucy leaned upon Caroll's arm, and they could no more recollect the time they had not been lovers than the day on which they came into existence.

The marriage had not been compassed without some opposition. There were points of domestic interest, family feuds, and several other obstacles, so that for one entire year they were separated from each other. Caroll, thus parted from his Lucy, had suffered much, while Lucy shed many tears at her separation from Caroll.

It was by saving her from great danger that Caroll at length obtained Lucy's hand.

One day he heard shrieks proceeding from the forest. They came from Lucy, who had been surprised by a brigand, the terror of all mountaineers. When Caroll arrived on the spot, this man was bearing her away. Caroll attacked this monster with a human face, who, from the singular roars that he made, resembling those of a wild beast, was called by the name of Han. Yes; Caroll struggled with a creature whom all others avoided, for love gave him the strength of a lion. He rescued his beloved Lucy, and restored her to her father, who in turn gave him her hand.

All the villagers rejoiced on the day on which the union took place. Lucy alone seemed sad. Never had she cast so tender a look upon Caroll; but that look was as sad as it was tender, a subject of much wonderment among the gay throng. As her husband's joy increased, she became more pensive.

"Oh, my Lucy!" exclaimed Caroll, after the holy ceremony, "the presence of that villain, which means sorrow to all, has been the source of my happiness."

Some remarked that she shook her head, but said nothing.

Evening came, the newly married pair retired to their cottage, while dancing and music went on gayly upon the village green.

The next morning Caroll Stadt had disappeared.

A few lines in his handwriting had been brought to Lucy's father by a hunter from the Kole mountains, who had met the bridegroom at daylight wandering about the shores of the gulf. Old Will Pelnryh showed the letter to the pastor and the syndic, and the festival of the previous day was followed by gloom all around, and Lucy's mute despair.

This mysterious ending threw the whole village into consternation, and the inhabitants vainly endeavored to conjecture the cause. Prayers for the repose of Caroll's soul were said in the same church where he, a few days previously, had joined in the nuptial hymn. After nine months had passed in solitude and mourning, the Widow Stadt gave birth to a son, and that same day the village of Golyn was destroyed by the fall of an overhanging rock.

The birth of this son did not alleviate his mother's grief. Gill Stadt in no way resembled Caroll. His fierceness as a child gave promise of more desperate deeds. Sometimes a wild-looking little man, whom the mountaineers asserted was Han of Iceland, came to Widow Stadt's deserted cottage, and passers-by could then distinctly hear a woman's plaintive cry, mingled with the roars of a wild beast. The man took away young Gill, and after some months restored him to his mother, looking more gloomy and savage than ever.

Widow Stadt's feeling for this child was one of mingled tenderness and horror. She would press him to her heart as a mother would her sole interest in life, and at other times she would repulse him, and call upon her Caroll, her own Caroll, to come to her. No one could understand what secret grief oppressed her.

Gill had attained his twenty-third year when he met Guth Sterson, and fell desperately in love with her. Guth was rich, and he was poor. He left for Rœraas to become a miner, in order to gain money. Since then his mother had never heard of him. One night as she was sitting at her spinning wheel, her only means of livelihood, her

lamp had burnt low, and the widow was thinking of her son she longed to see. The poor mother loved her boy despite his ingratitude. How could she help loving one for whom she had suffered so greatly? She opened a cupboard, and took up a crucifix covered with dust. For a moment she cast a supplicating glance toward it, then suddenly thrust it aside with horror.

"Pray!" she cried, "how can I pray? Wretched creature! you can only pray to Satan, for it is to him you now belong!"

She relapsed into her gloomy reverie, when a knock at the door roused her. This was a rare event. Thanks to the extraordinary life she led, the inhabitants of Thoc-tree had for many years considered her in league with the Evil One. Strange superstition of the times. Misfortune had gained for her the same reputation for sorcery as science had done for the guardian of the Spladgest.

"If it were my son, Gill!" cried she, rushing to the door.

Alas! it was only a little hermit, clothed in a robe of coarse cloth, the hood of which concealed everything but a black beard.

"Holy man," said the widow, "you do not know in whose house you have sought entrance."

"Yes, I certainly do," replied the hermit, in a harsh and too well-known voice.

Tearing off his gloves, his black beard, and throwing back his hood, he disclosed a hideous face, a red beard, and hands armed with nails like claws.

"Oh!" shrieked the widow, and buried her face in her hands.

"Well!" cried the little man; "in four-and-twenty years have you not become accustomed to the husband you will see through all eternity?"

"Eternity!" she muttered, horror-stricken.

"Listen, Lucy Pelnryh; I bring you news of your son."

"My son! where is he? why does he not return?"

"He cannot."

"But tell me why," returned she. "I will forgive you much if you can bring me this happiness."

"I bring you happiness," said the man, in a hollow voice. "You are but a weak woman, and I am surprised you could have had such a son. Rejoice, then. You feared your son would walk in my footsteps. Fear it no longer."



"What!" exclaimed the delighted mother; "my son, my beloved Gill, has then changed."

The hermit greeted her joy with a sardonic laugh.

"Oh! he is much changed."

"Why does he not hasten to embrace me? Where did you see him? what was he doing?"

"He was sleeping."

The widow, in her extreme joy, never remarked the man's jeering tone.

"Why did you not awake him? saying 'Gill, go to your mother?'"

"His slumber was too deep."

"Oh! when shall I see him?" said she. "Tell me, I entreat you, will he be here soon?"

The false hermit drew from beneath his robe a goblet of singular shape.

"Now widow," said he, "drink to your son's speedy return."

The widow shrieked with horror. It was a human skull. She thrust forth her hands, but her tongue was paralyzed.

"No, no!" cried the man, in a terrible voice, "do not turn away your eyes. Look, woman! You asked to see your son; behold all that remains of him."

In the red light of the lamp he held out the bare and polished skull of her son. This poor heart had borne too many sorrows for one more to break it.

"Oh! dead!" she feebly murmured, "dead. Let me die."

"Die if you wish it, but remember, Lucy Pelnryh, the past; think of Thoctree Forest. I am the demon who doomed your soul to hell, and you, Lucy, are my spouse to all eternity. Die, then, if you will."

In these superstitious countries people believed that evil spirits came among men and passed a life of crime, bringing calamity with them. Among other famous criminals, Han of Iceland had attained this appalling renown. It was also credited that if a woman fell a prey to these demons in human form, she was doomed for all eternity to be his companion.

The widow was recalled to her senses by the details of these past events.

"Alas!" she mournfully exclaimed, "I cannot escape. What did I do? Ah! my well-beloved Caroll, you know I was innocent. What was a young girl's strength compared to that of a demon?"



As she uttered these words her looks were full of madness; the incoherence of her speech was increased by the convulsive trembling of her lips.

"My Caroll, I never deceived you, but the demon held me as his own. Alas! I shall be punished to all eternity! No, I shall never see you again, you whom I never ceased to mourn. What is the good of dying? I must even then go with this monster to a world peopled with miscreants like himself. What have I done? My misfortunes will be held for crimes in all life to come."

The hermit cast looks of triumph and authority upon her.

"Ah!" cried she, turning to him, "this is but some fearful dream, inspired by your presence; for you well know that since the day I first saw you, every night in which your spirit has visited me has been marked by hideous and terrible visions."

"Woman! woman! return to reason. It is as true as you are awake that Gill is dead."

The remembrance of her former misfortunes had for the moment effaced the mother's present trouble; these words recalled her to her loss.

"Oh! my son! my son!" she cried, in her agony, which would have touched the heart of any but the fiend who listened to her. "No, he will return; he is not dead; I cannot believe he is dead."

"Well, then, go and ask the rocks of Røraas, that crushed him; ask the Gulf of Drontheim, which buried him."

The widow fell on her knees, and with an effort she cried, "God! great God."

"Silence! servant of Satan."

The wretched woman ceased, and he continued:

"No longer doubt that your son is dead. He was punished in the same way as his father was before him. He let his heart, which should have been as hard as granite, be softened by a woman. You are mine, but I never loved you. My son has been deceived by the woman for whom he died."

"Dead!" cried she, "dead! Oh, Gill! child of my misfortune, nursed in mourning, never did your caresses respond to mine, my embraces met with no return. You always repulsed and fled from your mother—your poor, lonely mother. You made me forget my past sorrows by creating fresh ones. You left me for the demon, the author of your existence and my widowhood. Gill, you

never caused me to feel a single joy, and yet your death seems to me the most unbearable of all my afflictions."

She could say no more, and burying her face in her black veil, she sobbed most piteously.

"Weak woman!" muttered the hermit. Then he exclaimed: "Conquer your grief, as I have crushed mine. Listen, Lucy Pelnyrh, you weep for your son; I am already avenging him. His betrothed deceived him for a soldier of Munckholm garrison. The whole regiment shall perish at my hands. Behold, Lucy Pelnyrh!" and throwing back his sleeves, he showed the widow his deformed and blood-stained arms.

"Yes!" he cried, with a kind of a roar, "on Urchtal Sands and the gorges of Carcadthymon Gill's spirit can joyfully wander. Woman! look on this blood, and console yourself." Suddenly recollecting himself, he exclaimed, "Did you receive an iron casket? Why, you still weep, yet I sent you gold and I bring you blood. You cannot belong to the human race."

The widow, absorbed in her grief, kept silence.

"What!" said he, with a savage laugh, "mute and immovable! Why, you cannot be a woman, Lucy Pelnyrh!"

He grasped her arm to attract her attention.

"Did any one bring you a sealed iron casket?"

The widow, with some show of attention, gave a negative sign with her head, and relapsed into her gloomy thoughts.

"Ah, the wretch! the faithless wretch!" cried the little man. "Spiagudry! that gold shall cost you dear!" and, casting his hermit's robe aside, he rushed from the cottage with a growl like that of a hyena in search of prey.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE RALLYING-CRY.

The coast of Norway so abounds in bays, creeks, reefs, lakes, and little capes, that they fatigue the traveler's memory and try the topographer's patience. According to popular belief, every isthmus was haunted by some demon, every promontory had its guardian angel, for superstition mingles all beliefs, in order to add to its terrors.

On the shores of Kelvel, some miles to the north of Walderhog Grotto, was one spot said to be entirely free

from the jurisdiction of spirits, either infernal or celestial. It was a meadow adjoining a river and sheltered by the rocks, on which could be seen the ruins of the castle of Ralph or Radulph the Giant. This wild little prairie, running down to the sea, and surrounded by rocks covered with heather, owed much of its privacy to the name of the first lord of the manor. What fairy, demon, or angel, would dare to reside in Ralph the Giant's domain?

The name alone was sufficient to stamp the place, but a remembrance is not like a living spirit, and fishermen when overtaken by a storm would moor their barks in Ralph the Giant's Creek, and they had never seen the corpse-light gleam and glimmer, nor the fairy skim the heath in his flaming car, drawn by glow-worms, nor the saint ascend to the moon after his prayers.

On the night after the storm, if the surf of the sea and the heavy wind had permitted any mariner to take shelter in the bay, his superstitious fears might have been roused on seeing three men seated round a fire blazing in the midst of the meadow. Two of them wore the large felt hats and loose trousers of the royal miners. Their arms were bare to the shoulder, they had tan-colored high boots on, and a belt of red cloth sustained their curved sabers and pistols. Both had a bugle horn slung from the neck. One was an old and the other a young man. The elder's thick beard and the long floating locks of the younger, gave a wild expression to their faces, naturally hard and weather-beaten.

From the bearskin cap, greasy leather coat, tight breeches, bare knees, bark sandals, the musket slung across his back, the ax gleaming in his hand, it was easy to recognize in their companion a mountaineer from the north of Norway. The three men frequently turned their heads toward the woods adjoining, and from the few words that could be heard they were awaiting the arrival of a fourth person.

"I say, Kennybol, we should not remain so undisturbed at this hour if we were waiting for Count Griffenfeld's messenger in a neighboring field, owned by Im Tulbytilbet, or over there in Saint Cuthbert's Bay."

"Do not speak so loudly, Jonas," said the mountaineer to the old miner. "A blessing on Ralph the Giant, for protecting us. May Heaven preserve me from setting foot in Tulbytilbet meadow. I went to pick some hawthorn there the other day, and I took mandragora by mis-

take, which began to bleed and scream, enough to drive me mad."

The younger man laughed.

"In faith, Kennybol, I believe the mandragora has had an effect on your poor, weak brain."

"Weak brain, indeed!" said the mountaineer, angrily. "Why, Jonas, he is ridiculing the idea of the mandragora. He laughs like an idiot when playing with a skull."

"Humph!" said Jonas. "Let him go to Walderhog Grotto, where the spirits of those murdered by Han of Iceland dance round his bed of dried leaves, gnashing their teeth to lull him to sleep."

"That is true," added the mountaineer.

"But," asked the young man, "Master Hacket, whom we are now expecting, promised us that Han of Iceland should put himself at the head of our insurrection?"

"He did so," replied Kennybol; "and with the help of this demon we are sure to conquer all the green jackets sent from Drontheim or Copenhagen."

"So much the better," exclaimed the old miner; "but I will not volunteer to be the sentinel on duty at night in his quarters."

At that moment a rustling among the brushwood attracted the men's attention. They turned round, and by the light from the fire they recognized the new-comer.

"It is he—it is Master Hacket. Welcome, Master Hacket; we have been at this meeting-place over three-quarters of an hour."

This Master Hacket was a short, stout-built man, dressed in black, whose jovial looking countenance at times evinced a very sinister expression.

"Well, my friends," said he, "I have been delayed by my ignorance of the way, and by the precautions it was necessary for me to take. I left Count Schumacker this morning. Here are three purses well filled with gold, which he requested me to give you."

The two elder men seized the purses with avidity; the younger miner rejected the money.

"Keep your gold, Master Envoy; I should lie if I said I rebelled for your Count Schumacker. I do so to free the miners from the royal tax, and that my mother's bed may be less rough than the coast of our own Norway."

Master Hacket was in no way disconcerted, but smilingly replied:

"I will then send this money to your mother, my dear

Norbith, so that she may have fresh covering to protect herself from the winter's blasts."

The young man bowed his acquiescence, and the clever orator hastened to add:

"But do not repeat what you have so inconsiderately said: that you are not taking up arms for Schumacker, Count of Griffenfeld."

"However," replied the two elder men, "we know well that the miners are oppressed, but we know nothing of this count, that State prisoner."

"What!" quickly returned the envoy, "how can you be so ungrateful? You were groaning in your subterraneous caves, deprived of light and air, robbed of all your property, and the slaves of a heavy tax. Who came to your help, who animated your courage, and gave you gold and arms? Was it not my illustrious master, the noble Count of Griffenfeld, who is more unfortunate than yourselves? And now, although accepting his benefits, you refuse to assist him to regain his liberty at the same time as you do your own."

"You are right," said the young miner; "it would be acting unjustly."

"Yes, Master Hacket," added the two old men, "we will fight for Count Schumacker."

"Courage, my friends; rise for the count, and let your benefactor's name be widely spread from one end of Norway to the other. Everything favors your enterprise. You will soon be rid of a formidable enemy, General Levin de Knud, the governor of this province. By my noble master, the Count of Griffenfeld's secret influence, he will at any moment be recalled to Berghen. Tell me, Kennybol, Jonas, and you, my dear Norbith, are your comrades ready for action?"

"My brethren of Guldbranshal," said Norbith, "only await my signal. To-morrow if you wish——"

"To-morrow, then; let it be so. The young miners, of whom you are the chief, must be the first to raise the standard. And you, Jonas?"

"Six hundred brave hearts from the Faroe Isles, who have been living for the last three days on chamois flesh and bear's grease in the forest of Bennallag, and only await a blast from the horn of their old captain, Jonas of Lœvig."

"Good; and you, Kennybol?"

"All those who carry an ax in the Kole Mountains, and



scale the rocks bare-kneed are ready to join their brother miners when they want them."

"That is well. Let your companions know that victory is certain." Here the envoy raised his voice. "Announce to them that Han of Iceland will be their leader."

"Is that really the case?" exclaimed the three miners, in a tone of mingled hope and terror.

The envoy replied :

"I will meet you four days hence at the same hour in the mine of Apsyl-Corh, near Lake Smiasen. Let all your comrades be there. Han of Iceland will accompany me."

"We will be there," answered the three chiefs. "May Heaven not forsake those who are led on by the demon."

"Heaven will never give you cause to fear," said Hacket, sneeringly. "Listen. You will find in the old ruins of Crag some banners for your troops. Do not forget the rallying-cry : 'Long live Schumacker ! Let us save Schumacker !' We must separate, for dawn is approaching. First swear to me that you will keep secret all that has passed between us."

Without a word the three chiefs pricked a vein in the left arm with the points of their sabers, then, seizing the envoy's hand, they each let a few drops fall from the wound upon it.

"You have our blood," they said.

"May mine be made to flow as freely as now," exclaimed the young miner ; "may I be haunted by the dead, and profaned by the living, if ever I mention what has taken place in Ralph the Giant's meadow. May the saints hear my vow."

"Amen," repeated his companions.

Then they separated, and nothing remained to indicate the late meeting but the dying embers, the sparks from which were borne up beyond the solitary and ruined towers of Ralph the Giant.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE PROMISED REWARDS.

Benignus Spiagudry could not account for a well-constituted young man like his traveling companion, who had many years of life before him, actually seeking the formidable Han of Iceland. During the journey he had often broached the subject, but the young adventurer main-



tained strict silence on the motive of his journey. The poor man was not more fortunate in gaining information on other points which roused his curiosity with regard to his young master's family. "Call me Ordener," said the latter, in a tone that forbade further notice. Every one has some secret, and the worthy Spiagudry himself carried a certain mysterious casket hidden in his knapsack; any remarks relating to this same article would have been very objectionable to him.

It was now four days since they had left Drontheim, and they had not made much progress, owing to the state of the roads, and the various and circuitous routes which the fugitive guardian considered prudent to take. Leaving Skongen to the right, on the evening of the fourth day, they reached the shores of Lake Sparbo. It was at once a magnificent and gloomy spectacle, reflecting as it did upon its surface the last rays of the sun and the first stars of night, and surrounded by a frame of high rocks, dark oaks, and pines.

Ordener stood contemplating these old forests, there since the Druidical era, and the chalk huts at Sparbo, spreading over the sloping ground like a herd of white goats. He listened to the distant clatter of the forges, mingled with the murmuring of the wind through the trees, the cries of the wild birds, and the sound of the waves beating on the shore. The last rays of the sun fell on an immense mass of granite that rose majestically above the little village of Oelmœ, its summit covered with ruined towers, looking like a giant wearied with his load.

Grand and heavy looking scenery has a soothing effect on a soul in its sadness. Ordener remained silent and motionless until his companion exclaimed:

"Well done, young master, you cannot do better than meditate beside this Norwegian lake, which is renowned for the number of its sand-flies."

This observation, and the gesture accompanying it, would have excited any one's laughter but a lover separated from his adored mistress.

"Besides," continued the learned guardian, "permit me to say that the day is declining, and we must hasten onward if we wish to reach Oelmœ before twilight."

There was reason in this, and Ordener resumed his journey, while Spiagudry followed, carefully noting the botanical and mineralogical curiosities to be seen about Lake Sparbo. Ordener paid no attention to his continual bab-

ble ; an occasional monosyllable was quite sufficient reply for so great a talker.

At last they arrived at Oelmœ, to find the village all astir. Blacksmiths, hunters, and fishermen had grouped themselves around a circular hillock, upon which several men were standing, one of whom was sounding a horn and waving a black and white banner above his head.

"It is some quack," said Spiagudry, "ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopœiæ, some wretch who turns gold into lead, and wounds into ulcers. Let us see what invention of Satan's he is going to sell these poor villagers. If these impostors contented themselves with making kings their dupes, all well and good, like Borch the Dane, and Borri the Milanese, who so completely tricked our own King Frederic III., but they must even rob the peasant as well as the prince."

Spiagudry was mistaken. On nearing the crowd they recognized the syndic, by his round cap tapering to a point, and his black gown. He was surrounded by some archers, among whom was the town crier with his horn.

The fugitive guardian, much concerned, murmured :

"I never expected to find a syndic in such a hamlet, Master Ordener. May Saint Hospice protect me ! What is he going to say ?"

He was not kept long in suspense, for the crier raised his squeaking voice, and the villagers listened to his words.

"In the name of his majesty, and by order of his excellency General Levin de Knud, governor, the high sheriff of the Drontheimhus makes known to all the inhabitants of towns, villages, and hamlets in this provincee !"

"1st. That a reward of one thousand crowns is offered for the apprehension of Han of Iceland, murderer and incendiary, dead or alive.

"2d. That a reward of four royal crowns is offered for the apprehension of Benignus Spiagudry, ex-guardian of Drontheim Spladgest, who has been guilty of necromancy and sacrilege.

"3d. That this edict shall be published throughout the province in all towns, villages, and hamlets by the different syndics, in order to facilitate its being carried out."

The syndic added, in a solemn tone :

"The lives of these men are at any one's mercy."

It can well be imagined what the wretched Spiagudry felt at this moment, and no doubt the signs of terror which he displayed would have drawn attention upon

himself had the villagers been less absorbed by the first part of the edict.

"A price on the head of Han!" cried an old fisherman, who had come to the spot with his dripping nets dragging behind him. "They may just as well, by Saint Usuph, set a price on the head of Beelzebub."

"To preserve the difference," added the hunter—easily recognized by his doublet of chamois skin—"only fifteen hundred crowns should be offered for the head with its horns of the last demon."

"Glory be to the Blessed Mother in heaven," muttered an old woman, with her distaff in her hand. "I should like to see Han's head, so that I might assure myself that his eyes are two live coals, as report says."

"Yes, and truly so," added another old gossip; "he set fire to Drontheim Cathedral by merely looking at it. I should like to see the monster, with his serpent's tail, his cloven feet, and his wings like a bat."

"Who told you all these stories, good mother?" interposed the hunter. "I have seen this Han of Iceland in the Medsyhath ravines. He is a man like ourselves, only he is as tall as a poplar tree of forty years' growth."

"Indeed!" said a voice, with singular emphasis.

Spiagudry trembled at the sound, which proceeded from a little man, whose features were concealed beneath the broad-brimmed hat of a miner. His costume consisted of reed matting and seal-skin.

"By my faith," said a smith, with a loud laugh, "they may offer a thousand or ten thousand crowns, if they like, for his head, and whether he be four or forty feet high, I will not be the man to discover him."

"Nor I," added a fisherman, and several others echoed the same.

"Any one who may be tempted to do so," said the little man, "will find Han of Iceland to-morrow in the ruins of Arbar, near Smiasen, and after that in Walderhog Grotto."

"Are you quite sure of this, my good man?"

This question was put by Ordener, who had eagerly listened to the conversation, and also by a short man, clothed in black, with a jovial-looking countenance, who, at the sound of the crier's horn, had come out of the only inn in the place.

The little man in the broad-brimmed hat looked earnestly from one to the other, and then simply muttered:

"Yes."

"What makes you so sure of the fact?" said Ordener.

"I know as well where Han of Iceland is at this moment as I know where Benignus Spiagudry is to be found; neither one nor the other are far from here."

All the poor guardian's former fears returned. He scarcely dared to look at the little man, and, doubtful lest his French wig was not sufficient disguise, he pulled Ordener by the cloak, and whispered:

"Master, in the name of Heaven, for pity's sake, let us hasten from this fiendish place."

Ordener, equally surprised, was examining the little man, who was so anxious to conceal his features.

"This Benignus Spiagudry!" exclaimed the fisherman, "why, I have seen him at Drontheim Spladgest. He is tall. Is that the one for whom four crowns have been offered?"

The hunter laughed.

"Four crowns, indeed! They won't get me to chase him for that. Why, I get more for a blue fox's skin."

Spiagudry at any other time would have felt insulted at the comparison; now it helped to reassure him. He was about to renew his appeal, when Ordener, who had gained all the information he required, suggested that they proceed on their way. They had intended to pass the night at Oelmœ, but they tacitly agreed to continue their journey. Ordener's motive was to meet the brigand as soon as possible, and Spiagudry's to put a greater distance between the archers and himself.

Ordener could find no amusement in his companion's misadventures, and he broke the silence in a friendly tone.

"Old man, what is the name of the ruin where Han of Iceland is to be found to-morrow, according to the little man's account?"

"I do not know. I did not catch the words, noble master," answered Spiagudry, which was really the fact.

"I must then resign myself to give up seeing him until the day after to-morrow at Walderhog Grotto."

"Walderhog Grotto is his favorite haunt."

"Let us take that road."

"We must turn to the left behind Oelmœ peak. In less than two days we shall reach Walderhog."

"Do you know this singular man," said Ordener, adroitly, "as well as he seems to know you?"

The question again aroused Spiagudry's fears, which

had been partially dispelled by the distance now between them and Oelmœ.

"No, master, really not at all," replied he, in a quivering tone. "Only I noticed he had a very strange voice."

Orderer endeavored to reassure him.

"Fear nothing, old man," said he; "serve me well, and I will protect you; and should I conquer Han, I not only promise you your pardon, but you shall have the whole of the reward, a thousand royal crowns, handed over to you."

Honest Benignus loved his life well; but he had a prodigious regard for gold. Orderer's promises were like magic words to him: they not only banished his fears, but they roused his hilarity, which evinced itself in long dissertations, accompanied by peculiar gesticulations and learned quotations.

"Master Orderer," said he, "even if Over-Bilseuth, the Babbler, himself asserted to the contrary, I would maintain that you are a good and honorable young man. What can be more worthy and glorious, *quid cithara tuba, vel campana dignius* than nobly to risk your life for the deliverance of your country from this monster, this brigand in whom all other demons, brigands, and monsters seem united. Let them not say to me that you are influenced by sordid interests, for the noble Orderer is ready to abandon the profits of his victory to the old man who will be his guide to Walderhog Grotto; at least, within a mile of it; for you will allow me to await the result of your noble enterprise at the village of Surb in the forest, just a mile from Walderhog. At the news of your glorious victory there will be similar rejoicings throughout Norway to those displayed by Vermund the Outlaw, when from the summit of this same Oelmœ peak he perceived the beacon-fire which his brother Halfdan had lighted as a token of his pardon on Munckholm Tower."

At this name Orderer quickly interrupted him.

"What! can you see Munckholm Tower from there?"

"Yes; twelve miles to the south, between those mountains formerly called Escabelles de Frigga. About this hour the beacon light is clearly visible."

"Is that really so?" exclaimed Orderer, elated at the idea of seeing the place in which his happiness was centered.

"Old man, is there any pathway leading up to the summit of the rocks?"

"Yes; it leads from the forest we are about to enter to



the rocks, and thence by steps hewn out of the face of the granite by Vermund the Outlaw's companions. The ruins of his castle adjoining can be seen by moonlight."

"Well, then, you must point out the way, for we shall pass the night in those ruins whence the tower of Munckholm is to be seen."

"Do you really mean it?" said Benignus. "The fatigues of the journey——"

"Old man, I will help you, for my step was never firmer than it is now."

"My lord, think of the obstructions, the stones, the night——"

"I will go first."

"Perhaps some wild beast, some enormous reptile, some hideous monster——"

"I did not take this journey to avoid monsters."

Spiagudry was far from being pleased at the idea of straying so near to Oelmœ. Ordener was enchanted at the thought of seeing Munckholm beacon, and perhaps the light shining through Ethel's window.

"My young master," said Spiagudry, "pray abandon this project. I have a presentiment it will bring you misfortune."

Ordener's wishes made him deaf to the old man's warnings.

"That is enough," replied Ordener, impatiently; "you undertook to serve me well, now show me the way to this place."

"We shall soon be there," said the guardian, compelled to obey.

Spiagudry remarked with astonishment, not unmingled with fear, that all the weeds had been trodden down, and Vermund the Outlaw's old route had been recently traversed.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE GOVERNOR'S PERPLEXITIES.

General Levin de Knud was seated before a table scattered with papers and open letters, deeply buried in thought. At length, with some difficulty, he roused himself, and addressed Wapherney, one of his secretaries, who was awaiting his orders.

"And did you see these bodies?" asked the general.



"Yes, general. They were those of three men belonging to the Munckholm regiment, two archers and an old man with a white beard, whose corpse was lying at the foot of the Rock of Lynraas. The soldiers and the archers were found in a ravine of Carcadthymon. They were all taken to the Spladgest, and no one can describe the horrible manner in which their bodies were mutilated: apart from being crushed out of all shape, the flesh is torn as though with a wild beast's claws."

"But what made the soldiers go to Carcadthymon?"

"They were sent in pursuit of the fugitive guardian of the Spladgest, for whom a reward has been offered. The old man's body was found the previous day below Lynraas."

"Do you think they have been murdered by the miners, of whose disaffection we hear so much?" inquired the general.

"There are no miners or mines within miles of Carcadthymon," replied Wapherney.

"We must inquire into all this. Now for the latest news," said the general, opening a large official-looking paper. With a loud exclamation of surprise, he continued: "Who would have thought that the miners would have taken such steps? They must have been instigated to open revolt by some secret influence. Really, Wapherney, this is very serious. Five or six hundred scoundrels from the Faroe Isles have left their mines, under the command of an old bandit named Jonas. A young fanatic, called Norbith, has placed himself at the head of the malcontents from Guldbranshal, while at Sund-Moer, Hubfallo, and Kongsberg, the disaffected spirits only wait for the signal to rise. Perhaps they are already in arms. The mountaineers have taken part, under the leadership of Kennybol, a brave old fox from Kole. According to the syndic's dispatches, that desperate villain, for whose head a price has been set, that formidable Han, is the chief of the insurgents. What do you say to all that, Wapherney?"

"Your excellency knows what measures——"

"There is one circumstance in this deplorable affair for which I cannot account, and that is, according to their assertion, Schumacker is the author of this revolt. This seems to astonish no one, yet to me it is the most astounding thing of all. It is difficult to credit that my loyal Ordener could find pleasure in a traitor's company. Yet they assure me the miners have risen in his name, and

'Schumacker' is their watchword, calling him at the same time by all the titles the king has deprived him of. All this seems authentic. But how was it that Countess d'Ahlefeld knew all these details six days ago, when the first real symptoms of the insurrection had scarcely shown themselves in the mines? This is very strange. We must be ready for any emergency. My seal, Wapherney."

The general wrote three letters and sealed them.

"Send this to Colonel Voethaun, at Munckholm, in order that his musketeers may at once march against the insurgents. This is for the Governor of Drontheim, that he may keep strict watch over the grand chancellor. I must see Schumacker myself, and question him. Dispatch this letter to Major Wolhm, at Skongen, for him to send a party against the rebels. Go, Wapherney, and see that my orders are carried out."

The secretary left the governor in deep reflection.

"All this is very grave," thought he. "The miners in revolt there, the intriguing wife of the chancellor here, that silly Ordener—no one knows where. Perhaps he is traveling in the midst of the rebels, leaving Schumacker, who is conspiring against the State, under my protection, and his daughter, for whose sake I recalled the company of soldiers commanded by Frederic d'Ahlefeld, whom Ordener accuses of—— Why, this very company is now in a position to check the first movement of the rebel column. Walhstrom, where it is quartered, is near to Lake Smiasen and the ruins of Arbar. The insurgents will be sure to make for that point."

The general was disturbed from his reverie by the opening of the door.

"Well, Gustave; what is it, Gustave?"

"General, a messenger is inquiring for your excellency."

"What has occurred? some fresh disaster? Show the messenger in."

"On the part of the viceroy," said the messenger, handing a dispatch to the governor.

The general tore open the cover.

"By St. George," exclaimed he, "they must be all mad. The viceroy summons me to Berghen on a pressing matter, by order of the king. This pressing business comes at a good time, I must say. 'The grand chancellor, who is in Drontheimhus, will supply your post.' A substitute in whom I have no confidence. 'The bishop will assist

him.' Really, Frederic chooses two famous governors for a province in a state of rebellion. A couple of gowmsmen, forsooth! However, the order is on the part of the king, and I must go. I will see Schumacker before leaving, and question him. They wish to entangle me in a mass of intrigue. I have an infallible compass, which never deceives me—my conscience."

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## CHAPTER XX.

## THE STRAY SHOT STRUCK HOME.

"Yes, lord count, we shall meet him to-day in the ruins of Arbar. A number of circumstances tend to verify the truth of what I heard by chance at Oelmœ."

"Are we far from these ruins?"

"They are near Lake Smiasen. The guide assured me we should be there by midday."

This conversation took place between two horsemen, wrapped in brown cloaks, who since the early morning had been following narrow winding tracks through the forest, situated between Lakes Smiasen and Sparbo. A mountain guide, with his horn round him, and armed with an ax, preceded them on his little gray pony, and four men armed to the teeth brought up the rear, toward whom the horsemen occasionally turned, as though afraid of being overheard.

"If this Iceland brigand is really in the ruins of Arbar," said one of the riders, in a respectful tone, "it will be a great point gained, for the difficulty is to meet this unconquerable being."

"You think so, Musdœmon? Suppose he rejects our offers?"

"Impossible, your grace. What brigand would resist gold and a free pardon?"

"You well know that this is not an ordinary rascal. Do not judge him by yourself. Should he refuse, how will you fulfill the promise you gave the night before last to the three chiefs of the insurgents?"

"Well, in that case, your grace, not likely, if once we meet our man. Have you forgotten that a false Han of Iceland two days hence will await me at the Blue Star?"

"You are always right, my dear Musdœmon," said the count.

Then each became absorbed in his own reflections.

Musdœmon, whose aim was to keep his master in good humor, endeavored to distract his thoughts by questioning the guide.

"My good man," said he, "what is that kind of broken stone cross standing up behind those young oaks?"

The guide, a stupid looking fellow, shook his head, and turning round, said :

"Oh, master, that is the oldest gibbet in Norway. Holy King Olaus had it constructed to hang a judge who had made a compact with a robber."

Musdœmon was surprised to see the expression of his patron's face at the guide's remark.

"It is a very curious tale," continued the latter. "Old Mother Oise told it to me. It appears the brigand was deputed to hang the judge, and——"

The poor guide did not perceive that the tale he was relating to the travelers, instead of amusing them, had quite the contrary effect.

"Enough! enough!" interrupted Musdœmon; "we know that story well."

"Insolent rascal!" muttered the count. "He knew all about the tale. Ah Musdœmon, you shall pay me for this some day."

"Did your grace speak?" said Musdœmon obsequiously.

"I was considering the best way of obtaining the Order of the Dannebrog for you. The marriage of my daughter Ulrica with Baron Ordener would be a good occasion."

Musdœmon overwhelmed his master with thanks and protestations.

"Now, let us go back to our affairs," continued his grace. "Do you think that order of instant recall has reached the Mecklinburger (as the count was pleased to name him), General Levin de Knud?"

"Our affairs, indeed!" repeated Musdœmon to himself; "as if my affairs were not our affairs. My lord count," continued he, aloud, "I should not think that the viceroy's messenger has reached Drontheim before this."

The count assumed an affectionate tone.

"That summons to Berghen, my dear Musdœmon, was a master-stroke of yours. It is one of your best conceived and executed plans."

"The credit belongs to your grace as much as to me," replied Musdœmon, anxious to implicate the count in every intrigue.

His master knew this perfectly well, but he feigned ignorance.

"My dear private secretary," he smilingly observed, "you are too modest; but nothing will ever make me forget your eminent services. Elphege's presence and the Mecklenburger's absence assure my triumph at Drontheim. I am now the governor of the province; and if Han of Iceland accept the command of the insurgents, which I will offer him myself, it is I who will return with all the glory in the king's eyes of having suppressed a dangerous insurrection and captured a formidable brigand."

They spoke thus in whispers, when the guide turned round and said :

"My lords, to our left, on yonder hillock, Biord the Just had Vellon the Forked-tongued beheaded in the presence of the army. This traitor had succeeded in withdrawing all the king's true defenders, and substituted the enemy into the camp, so that he alone might have the credit for saving King Biord's life."

The records of ancient Norway were not to Musdœmon's taste, for he roughly interrupted the guide.

"Come, come, my good fellow, that is enough; let us continue our journey without any further preamble. What do we care to hear about old ruins and dead trees? Besides, you annoy my master with your women's tales."

He spoke the truth.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### HIS FEARS WERE MORE THAN REALIZED.

We left Ordener and Spiagudry with difficulty ascending the narrow path up the rocks leading to Oelmœ peak.

The Norwegian peasant called this huge mass of granite "Vulture's Neck," from its curved appearance.

As our travelers neared the more elevated portions of the rock, the forest was replaced by heather, and the grass by moss; the wild brier, the broom, the holly bush, by the oak and the birch trees.

Vegetation gradually became more and more scanty, a sure sign that the summit was nearly reached. The bare rock was plainly visible through the thin covering of earth, so much so that what might be termed the skeleton of the mountain was disclosed.

"Master Ordener," said Spiagudry, whose mind wandered to all sorts of subjects, "this ascent is very



fatiguing, and it shows my devotion in following you. Look to the right. Do you see that magnificent convolvulus? How I should like to examine it. What a pity it is not daylight. I must say it is a great piece of impertinence to value so learned a head as mine at only four miserable crowns. Certainly the celebrated Phædra was a slave, and Esop, according to Doctor Planudus, was sold like a beast in the market-place. Who would not be proud to have something in common with Esop?"

"And with the celebrated Han, too," added Ordener with a smile.

"By Saint Hospice!" answered the guardian, "do not speak so lightly of his name. I can assure you, I can well dispense with this last conformity. It would be singular if the price set on his head were to return to his companion in misfortune, Benignus Spiagudry. You, Master Ordener, are more generous than Jason, for he did not bestow the golden fleece on the pilot of the Argo, and certainly your enterprise, of which I do not clearly see the object, is no less perilous than that of Jason."

"But," said Ordener, "since you are acquainted with Han of Iceland, give me some information respecting him. You have already told me he is not a giant, as is commonly reported."

Spiagudry interrupted him.

"Stay, master did you not hear a noise behind us?"

"Yes," calmly replied the young man. "Do not alarm yourself; it is only some wild beast, who, alarmed at our approach, has fled through the brushwood."

"You are right, my young Cæsar; it is long since a human being ever set foot in these parts. Judging from the weight of its tread, the animal must have been a big one. It was an elk or a reindeer, for Norway abounds with them. Wildcats are also to be found. I saw one that was brought to Copenhagen, and it was a monstrous size. I will describe this fierce creature to you."

"My dear guide," said Ordener, "I should infinitely prefer you to give me a description of another monster, no less fierce—that horrible Han of Iceland."

"Lower your voice, my lord. How can my young master pronounce that name so carelessly? You do not know—Great Heaven, sir! Listen! listen!"

As he said these words Spiagudry pressed close to Ordener, who distinctly heard a roar similar to that which the timid guardian had heard on the stormy night they quitted Drontheim.



"Did you hear it?" said he, gasping for terror.

"Certainly," replied Ordener; "but why should you tremble? It is only the cry of some wild beast; perhaps the very tiger cat you were speaking about just now. Do you expect to pass through such a place without hearing something from the hosts we are troubling with our company? They are more afraid of us than we are of them."

Spiagudry was reassured by his companion's calmness.

"You may be right, but that beast's roar very much resembles a voice—— Allow me to say, master, that you must have been inspired by some evil genius when you thought of this journey to Castle Vermund. I fear misfortune will happen to us on the Vulture's Neck."

"Fear nothing while you are with me," said Ordener.

"Oh! nothing seems to alarm you; but it was only Saint Paul who could handle vipers with impunity. You did not even remark how this pathway has been lately trodden down."

"I confess I scarcely noticed it; besides, I do not allow my courage to fail me at the sight of a blade of grass bent down more or less. We shall soon leave the bether behind us, and we shall then not be troubled with footsteps, or the cries of wild beasts. Pluck up your courage, and gather your strength together, for the ascent up to the summit will be far more trying."

"It is not that it is steeper, master; but the learned traveler Suckson relates that the way is blocked up by masses of rock and heavy stones, which it is impossible to remove, and difficult to pass over. There is close to Malaer postern a huge triangular block of granite, that I am anxious to see. Schœnning declares the three ancient Runic letters are visible upon it."

The travelers at length reached a small dilapidated tower, which barred the way.

"That is Malaer postern, master. It was always guarded by four men, and was the advanced post of Castle Vermund."

The guardian continued his discourse as they painfully wended their way over rolling stones, sharp flints, and damp grass. Ordener forgot all his fatigue in the thought of once more gazing on Munckholm Towers. Spiagudry suddenly exclaimed:

"Ah! I see it; this view recompenses me for all my toils. Look there, my lad."

"What do you see?" asked Ordener, who was dreaming of his Ethel.

"The triangular pyramid mentioned by Schœnning and Bishop Isleef. What a pity it is not moonlight."

On approaching the famous block, Spiagudry uttered a cry of disappointment and terror.

"You thought the stone barred the way," said Ordener; "you ought to be pleased to find such is not the case."

"This removal is what alarms me," said Benignus, in a doleful tone.

"Why?"

"Why, master, do you not see that the pyramid has been totally misplaced, and rests upon that side on which are the Runic letters? Added to this, the overthrow of this mass proves the presence of some supernatural being; no human creature could have moved it, save one man's——"

"My poor guide, you are again panic-stricken. This stone may have been in this position for a century."

"It is certainly one hundred and fifty years since the last observations were made," said Spiagudry, more calmly. "Look, master, it must have been freshly done, for the ground where it formerly rested is still damp."

Ordener, eager to advance, impatiently dragged him away from the marvelous, and tried to soothe his fears by kind words.

"Listen, old man. You can settle down on the borders of the lake, and pursue your important studies, when you have received the thousand royal crowns—the price set on Han's head."

"You are right, master, but do not be too sure of victory. I can help you with a little advice, which may be of use in capturing this monster."

"Advice? what advice?"

"The brigand," whispered Spiagudry, casting uneasy looks around, "drinks out of a skull which hangs from his belt. This skull is his son's, and for the mutilation of whose body I am now pursued."

"Raise your voice, for I can hardly catch your words. Fear nothing. Well, what about this skull?"

"You must gain possession of it," again whispered the guardian. "The monster has many superstitious ideas respecting it. Once the skull is within your grasp, you may do what you please with its owner."

"That is all very well, my good man; but how am I to obtain it?"

"By stratagem, master; perhaps when the monster is sleeping."

"That is enough. I cannot avail myself of your advice. I never attack a sleeping foe; my sword is my defense."

"My lord, has it not been proven that the Archangel Michael used strategy to overcome Satan?"

Here Spiagudry stretched forth his hands in terror, and said almost inaudibly:

"Oh, Heaven! what do I see there? Look! master; is not that a little man walking before us?"

"I see nothing," said Ordener.

"Nothing! Ah! but the path winds round, and he has disappeared behind the rock. I entreat you to go no further. May Saint Hospice watch over us!"

"You have taken a scared owl for a man."

"I certainly thought I saw a little man, but it may have been the shadow of the moon. It was this that caused Baldan, Lord of Merneugh, to mistake a white curtain for his mother's ghost, and which induced him to give himself up the next day to the Christiania judges, declaring himself a matricide, and thus saving the life of an innocent page."

Spiagudry was always ready to forget the present in the past, and Baldan's story drove all fears from his mind.

However, they reached the summit of "Vulture's Neck," and saw the ruins mostly in a state of utter decay. The travelers entered the ancient manor by a fissure of the wall, for the postern gate was blocked up by a mass of fallen stone. The only tower that still remained erect was situated at the farther end, from the summit of which, according to Spiagudry's account, Munckholm beacon could be seen. The moon had entirely disappeared behind a dark cloud. They were about to pass through a breach in another wall of the castle when Benignus stopped short, and seized Ordener's arms.

"What is the matter now?" said Ordener.

Benignus, without replying, pressed his arms still more, and motioned him to keep silence. At last he whispered tremulously:

"Master, what do you say now? do you repent coming here?"

"Certainly not; I hope to go on farther. Why should I repent?"

"What! did you not see?"

"What do you mean? I saw nothing, and I only heard the clattering of your teeth."

"Not behind the shadow of that wall? Did you not perceive the two glaring eyes, like comets, fixed on us?"

"On my honor, I did not."

"You did not see them move about—first up and then down, and finally disappear among the ruins?"

"I do not understand you; but what does this signify?"

"Are you aware, Master Ordener, that only one man in Norway has eyes that gleam in the darkness?"

"Well, who is this individual with cat's eyes? Is it the formidable Han of Iceland? All the better. It will spare us the journey to Walderhog."

"Ah, master, you promised to leave me at the village of Surb, a mile from the struggle."

Ordener's kindly nature found an excuse for these fears.

"You are right; it would be unjust to compel you to take part in my danger. Fear nothing. You see Han of Iceland everywhere. A wild-cat's eyes would shine quite as brilliantly as this man's."

For the fifth time Spiagudry was reassured by his companion's calmness of manner and common-sense explanations.

The guardian heaped a quantity of dried branches together and striking a light with two flints, in a very short time a clear flame arose, which reflected on the whole of the objects within the tower.

Nothing remained but a thick circular wall covered with moss and ivy. The floors of the four stories had fallen to the ground. A spiral staircase without any rail wound round the interior of the wall, and led to the battlements. At the first glimmer of light a number of screech-owls and ospreys flew away with frightened and discordant cries, while huge bats at intervals fanned the flame with their ashen-colored wings.

"Our hosts do not give us a very gay reception," said Ordener; "pray do not alarm yourself again."

"What!" returned Spiagudry, seating himself by the fire, "do you think I fear an owl or a bat—I who have lived among dead bodies, and not been alarmed at vampires? I have no fear of the living. I confess I am not brave, but I am not superstitious. Master, let us think of supper."

Ordener could only think of Munckholm.

"I have a few provisions here," said Spiagudry, drawing his knapsack from under his cloak; "if your appetite equals mine, this black bread and dry cheese will soon disappear. It is not much of a meal, but it is better than nothing. I dare say there are plenty of gulls' and

pheasants' nests on the top of the tower. None but a sylph could venture up that dilapidated staircase."

"Well," answered Ordener, "I certainly intend to risk it."

"What! master! for the sake of some gulls' nests? Pray do not be so imprudent. Besides, after all, you may only find screech-owls' eggs."

"I am not thinking of your birds' nests. Did you not tell me that Munckholm could be seen from the summit of this tower?"

"That is right. Now I know the reason for this journey; you wish to settle some geographical point. Remember, a scholar may endure fatigue for the sake of science, but he should never court danger. I entreat you not to risk your life on this dangerous staircase, which would hardly bear a crow."

"What have you there?" said Ordener, as Spiagudry's knapsack fell to the earth with a distinct metallic sound.

"Only a metal plate, which struck against a stone. As nothing will turn you from your purpose, keep a firm hold of the ivy, and turn as quickly as possible."

The guardian was anxious to be rid of this questioning. Ordener threw aside his cloak, and commenced the perilous ascent.

"And now," said Spiagudry, "that young lynx's eyes are off me, let me break open this casket and take possession *oculis et manu* of the treasure that it no doubt contains."

He was on the point of doing so, when he was attracted by the coat-of-arms on the casket.

"By Saint Willebrod! these are the Griffenfeld arms; perhaps the only model which remains, since the rest of them were destroyed by the executioner in 1676. I must carefully hide this treasure, and wait for the opportunity when I can turn the lock without injuring the armorial bearings. Should any one be tempted by the four miserable crowns the syndic has offered, and take me, I can ransom myself. So this casket will prove a means of safety."

Now, at the end of this soliloquy, he raised his eyes. In an instant their expression changed from joyful ease to horrified surprise, his limbs trembled violently, and he was unable to articulate a sound. Facing him, on the other side of the fire, with his arms crossed and his hands resting upon the handle of a stone ax, stood a little man with a red beard, clothed in skins stained in many places with blood, with his piercing eyes fixed savagely upon him.

"Yes, it is I," said the little man. "And so the casket



would be a means of safety, would it, Spiagudry?" He added, with a bitter smile, "Is this the road to Thoctree?"

The unhappy man tried to articulate a few words.

"Thoctree—my master—I was going there——"

"You were on your way to Walderhog," replied the other, in a voice of thunder.

Frantic with fear, Spiagudry tried to make a negative sign.

"You were conducting an enemy to me. Thank you; it will be but one man less in the world. Fear not, oh, faithful guide; he will follow you."

The wretched man endeavored to cry for help, but only a low moan escaped his lips.

"Why does my presence alarm you? Why, you were seeking me. Listen! One cry, and you are a dead man."

The little man brandished the ax over his head, while he continued, in a voice resembling the torrent as it bursts from a cavern:

"You have betrayed me!"

"No, your grace—your excellency," stammered forth the other.

The intruder uttered a loud roar.

"Ah! so you would deceive me. Do not attempt it. Listen! I was on the Spladgest roof when you made a compact with that idiot. It was I whose voice you twice heard; it was I whom you again heard in the storm; it was I you saw in the Tower of Vyglā. I would not let those Munckholm soldiers escape me. You I could always find. It was I that you saw wearing the miner's hat at Oelmœ; it was I whose voice resounded and whose form you saw as you ascended this path, and it is I who am here before you!"

Spiagudry was more than convinced; he rolled at the feet of his inexorable judge, crying in a stifled tone: "Mercy!"

"The casket will secure your safety," answered the other, with an ironical laugh.

"Mercy, my lord; mercy, I pray!"

"I warned you to be faithful and silent. You have been faithless, but silent you shall be in the future, I promise you."

The wretched creature understood the full sense of these horrible words, and uttered a low moan.

"Fear not; I will not separate you from your treasure," said Han, and unloosing his leather belt, he passed it



through the handle of the casket, and suspended it round Spiagudry's neck, who bent with the weight.

"Now! to what fiend would you confide your soul? Quick! call upon him, lest another demon should first take possession of it."

The old man in his despair embraced the other's knees, with a thousand gestures of terrified supplication.

"No! no!" cried Han. "Listen! faithful Spiagudry.

"Do not grieve at leaving your young companion without a guide. I promise he shall follow you. You are only going before to show him the way."

Grasping the miserable wretch as a tiger seizes a serpent, he dragged him away. A moment after a terrible cry echoed through the ruins, mingled with the sounds of horrible laughter.

After many narrow escapes, Ordener had succeeded in reaching the battlements, and his eyes at once rested on the red light gleaming in the horizon. It was Munckholm beacon. A heavenly joy stirred his entire being as he gazed on the spot that held her who was so dear to him.

"She is there," murmured he; "she sleeps, little knowing that her Ordener is gazing from afar on her dwelling—her Ordener who carries the lock of her hair over his heart."

Suddenly he heard a piercing shriek, followed by a burst of fiendish laughter, and glancing down he saw that the tower was deserted. He hurried down, heedless of the danger, but he had scarcely reached the ground when a heavy body fell, separating the deep waters of the lake beneath.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### FRIENDSHIP HAS CLAIMS.

The traveler who ventures to scour the mountains surrounding the Lake Smiasen will find no traces of the Ruins of Arbar, so termed by the Norwegians of the seventeenth century. Why the original building, if so it could be called, had been erected, and by whom, were unknown to all. Leaving the forest behind on the south of the lake, after ascending an incline studded here and there with what remained of walls and towers, the side of the mountain, was broken through by an arched opening, entirely hidden at the present time by landscapes. This chasm was then the entrance to a sort of gallery, pierced through solid rock, and going across the mountain, the whole faintly

lighted from the roof by loop-holes made at equal distances. This passage ended in an oblong recess, hewn out of the rock. The roughest style of architecture reigned throughout, from the deep niches round the room, to the figures so poorly sculptured they inclosed, which in some cases had fallen pell-mell amid the ruins, now covered with herbs and moss, a refuge for the lizard, the spider, and the revolting insects all taking birth from ruin and decay.

Daylight in this place was only to be seen through the door opening on to the gallery. This outlet on the one side presented the appearance of a roughly hewn arch, bearing no date. Though opening on to the ground, it had much the appearance of a window overlooking an immense precipice, with a short flight of three or four steps beneath, overhanging the abyss, leading apparently to no thoroughfare.

This room formed the interior to a gigantic tower, which seemed but one of the mountain-peaks when viewed from a distance. The tower stood alone, and none knew to what edifice it had originally belonged. On a plain above, beyond reach of the most daring sportsman, a mass was visible, which was either some misshapen rock or the ruins of some colossal arch. This tower and arch were termed by the peasants the ruins of Arbar, in ignorance as to the meaning.

A little man, often mentioned before, clad in animals' skins, was seated on a stone in the center of the room, with his back to the noonday sun, which seemed but twilight in this gloomy tower. He was leaning over some object, not distinguishable, but evidently a living body, by the slight perceptible motion and the feeble groans which issued from it. The little man now and again took long draughts of some warm liquid from a goblet formed of a human skull.

"Some one is in the gallery," said he, rising hastily. "Can the chancellor of two kingdoms have arrived?"

These words were followed by a burst of laughter, ending in a savage roar, which was suddenly taken up by a howl.

"Oh, oh!" said the denizen of the ruins. "This is no man, but a wolf; an enemy, for all that."

Suddenly a fierce-eyed wolf appeared, and crept stealthily toward the man, who stood with folded arms watching him.

"Ah! so it is the old grisly wolf, the patriarch of the forest! Wolf, how are you? There is a brightness about your eyes; you are famished, and the scent of a corpse at-

tracts you. What an attraction you will soon be for hungry wolves! You are welcome, Smiasen Wolf; I have always longed to meet you; and you have arrived at such an age that people believe you will never die. They will not say that to-morrow."

The animal sprang back with a fearful howl, and then bounded forward on to the man, who never moved an inch.

Quick as lightning with his right hand he seized the wolf, who had planted his claws on the man's shoulders; with the other he caught the animal by the throat, to protect his face from its gaping jaws, with such a grasp that the wolf howled with pain.

"Wolf of Smiasen, you are tearing my jacket; but your skin will make a good substitute!"

He had just followed his shout of victory with some curious jargon, when the wolf gave a sudden jerk, which threw them both to the ground. The cries from the man were mingled with the howling from the wolf.

Compelled in the fall to release the animal's throat, the little man soon felt his shoulder pierced with its sharp teeth. Thus rolling over one another, the combatants struck against an enormous white mass lying in the darkest part of the room.

It consisted of a bear, who rose growling, thus awakened from his heavy slumbers. When he could distinguish what was going forward, he made a furious bound—not on the man, but on to the wolf, who was gaining ground, and seizing him violently, he freed the adversary with the human face.

The latter, completely bloodstained, rose up. Far from showing gratitude for so great a service, the man treated the bear as a man does his dog when in disgrace—kicked him.

"Friend, what brought you here? Mind your own business!" said he, furiously gnashing his teeth. "Now be off!"

The bear, who had been kicked by the man and bitten by the wolf, gave forth a plaintive moan, and retired, thus releasing the famished animal, who threw himself on to the man with renewed vigor.

The bear remained quietly in his sleeping quarters while the struggle continued, stroking down his white muzzle with his paws, and looking on the two enemies with the utmost indifference.

When the wolf returned to the charge, the little man first seized him by the muzzle, and then caught hold of his

throat. The animal, both from rage and pain, made desperate struggles for release. He foamed at the mouth, and his eyes seemed ready to start from his head.

Of the two adversaries, he whose bones were splintered by the sharpest of fangs, whose flesh was torn by fierce nails, belonged not to the man, but the wild beast; the savage expressions and the frightful howling came not from the wild beast, but the man.

Weakened by the wolf's long resistance, Han made a final effort, and grasped him with both hands by the muzzle, till blood flowed from the nose and mouth; his eyes half-closed, and with one convulsive movement, he fell at his conqueror's feet, and for him life soon ceased to exist.

"So you are dead!" said the little man, kicking the body contemptuously. "Did you think to lengthen your days after meeting me? You won't follow scent in quest of prey again through the snow. The wolves and vultures will now have their turn, and take it out of you. What travelers you must have devoured during your long, murderous career! Now, there you lie dead, never again to feast on man—more is the pity!"

Using a sharp flint, he soon dismantled the wolf, and covered himself with the animal's warm and gory skin, turned inside out. His shoulders, torn by the wolf's fangs, were thus out of sight.

"I must use the skin of beasts," muttered he, "for that of man is too thin to protect me from the cold."

Thus meditating, he looked more hideous than his hideous trophy. The bear, weary of waiting, stealthily advanced toward the mass before mentioned and soon amid the gloom was heard the grinding of teeth, mingled with faint and plaintive moans.

"Friend!" cried the man threateningly. "'Ah, you wretched Friend! come here, I tell you!"

He threw a large stone at the monster's head, who, though stunned, by the blow, rose up reluctantly from the feast, smacking his lips, and ambled toward his master's feet. With a pleading expression he raised his head, mutely asking pardon for his indiscretion.

Both monsters now could be heard—for the denizen of the Ruins of Arbar had well earned the title. The man's voice denoted power and anger; the bear's growl submission and pleading.

"Take your own prey!" said the man, pointing with his crooked fingers toward the wolf, "and leave me mine."

The bear sniffed at his share, shook his head discontentedly, and looked up at his master.

"I understand you. Dead prey is not to your liking; you prefer the other, as it still has life. You are quite an epicure in your taste! Friend, like man, you seek the living in order to destroy them. You delight in causing suffering; there we have a fellow feeling, for I am not a man, Friend. I am above that depraved race—I am a wild beast like yourself. Companion Friend, I wish you could speak, just to say if your bearish feelings equal my delight at devouring a man. Yet I would rather not hear you, for the sound might remind me of the human voice. Growl at my feet! The roar which terrifies the mountain deer to me is a friendly voice, for it forewarns me that an enemy is nigh. Friend, raise up your head; lick my hand with the tongue that has so often partaken of human blood! Your teeth are white like mine—no fault of yours, for we have done our best to change them red; but it seems that blood cleanses blood. I have often noticed young girls with bare feet, down by the water, singing sweetly the while. In preference to their melodious voices and lovely faces, I delight in your shaggy muzzle and hoarse cries, for they strike terror to a man.

While thus musing, he allowed the monster to caress his hand, and show him all the affection a spaniel displays toward his mistress.

What was still more strange was the rapt attention with which the animal listened to his master's words more particularly to odd monosyllables, which he at once acknowledged by some curious sound.

"Men say I shun them. Why, they shun me! They from fear, and I from hatred. Yet, Friend, you know I do fancy a man sometimes—that is, when I feel hungry or thirsty."

Suddenly a red light appeared, giving a faint color to the old walls of the gallery.

"Why, here comes one! Well, speak of the devil and you see his horns. Up, Friend! I must reward your obedience by satisfying your appetite."

Turning with his hatchet to the mass on the ground, he soon crunched through the bones; but the sound this time was not blended with either sighs or groans.

"So it seems there are but two living creatures here now," muttered the man. "There, Friend, my Friend, enjoy your feast," said he, throwing aside the portion detached from the object at his feet.



The bear seized his prey so eagerly, that the most sharp-sighted could hardly have seen if the morsel were a human arm, covered with green, such as the uniform worn by Munckholm musketeers.

"Come, Friend, I must be alone, for some one approaches; so be off," he added, as the light gradually increased.

The monster obeyed; taking with him his revolting prey, he retreated through the door and down the steps, with a howl of satisfaction.

A man of medium height now came forward, bearing a long brown cloak, and carrying a dark lantern, with the bull's-eye turned full on the little man, who was still seated with his arms crossed.

"You are unwelcome!—you who have come to carry out an idea, and not from some instinctive feeling."

The stranger made no reply, but looked at him attentively.

"Stare on," said he, raising his head. "Why, in an hour's time you won't have voice enough left even to boast you have seen me."

The new-comer continued casting the light on the little man, evidently more surprised than alarmed.

"Well, what astonishes you?" said he, with a hoarse laugh. "I have arms and legs as well as you, only mine will never be food for wild cats and crows."

"Listen," said the stranger, sinking his voice, as though he feared to be overheard. "I am not come as an enemy, but as a friend."

"Why then here in man's form?"

"I wish to serve you, if you are the one I am looking for."

"That means, you want me to serve you. Man, you are wasting time. I am only of use to those who are weary of life."

"Your speech denotes the man I am seeking," replied the stranger, "but your height—Han of Iceland is a giant; you cannot therefore be he."

"This is the first time any one has doubted it to my face."

"Then you are the person," added the stranger, approaching; "but Han of Iceland is a Colossus."

"Add my height to my fame, and I shall be taller than Hecla itself."

"Then you are Han of Iceland?"

"I decline to answer that question," retorted the little



man. Rising, he accompanied the remark with such a look that the stranger drew back, with a glance toward the end of the gallery, regretting his rash venture, and exclaimed :

"Confine yourself, I pray, to looks only. Your interests alone bring me here."

The new-comer on arrival scarcely realized the kind of man who now stood before him, with tiger-like expression and blood-stained appearance, his immense hands armed with huge nails. The stranger shuddered in the same way a traveler would do on being bitten by a viper, when he thought to handle an eel.

"My interests!" replied the monster. "Have you come to inform me that a spring is to be poisoned, or a village burnt down, or a Munckholm musketeer to be strangled?"

"Perhaps I have. Now listen to me. The Norway miners are in a revolt. You know what disasters that entails."

"Yes. Murder! violence! sacrilege! fire! pillage!"

"I offer you all these."

"I don't want your offer. I can act for myself," said the little man, with such a hoarse laugh that it made the stranger tremble. He continued, however :

"In the name of the miners I offer you the command of their forces."

The little man was silent for a moment, then, with an expression of deep malice, he said :

"Do you really make the offer in their name?"

The new-comer was somewhat disconcerted, but feeling secure in his unknown identity, he soon recovered himself.

"Why are the miners in revolt?" asked the little man.

"To free themselves from the king's tax."

"Only for that?" retorted the other, mockingly.

"They wish also to set the prisoner at Munckholm at liberty."

"Is this the sole reason for the insurrection?" answered he, in such a tone as to disconcert the stranger.

"I know of no other," stammered he.

"Ah! so you know of no other?"

To put an end to these embarrassing remarks the stranger drew forth a heavy purse, which he threw at the monster's feet, saying :

"There is your pay as commander."

"I won't have it," said he, kicking away the purse. "Do you think I should wait for your permission to take either your blood or your gold?"

The stranger looked up both in surprise and fear.

"The royal miners sent you that as a present."

"I don't want it, I tell you; gold is of no use to me. Men sell their souls, but they will not sell their lives; we are therefore compelled to take them."

"I can then tell the miners that the formidable Han of Iceland accepts the command?"

"I do not accept it."

This answer, said shortly, made a disagreeable impression on the miners' pretended envoy.

"What! you actually refuse to take part in an expedition which promises so many advantages to you?"

"I can plunder farms and cottages, murder peasants or soldiers, alone."

"Yes, but in joining the miners you are free of all consequences."

"And you still assert all this in the miners' name?" asked the other, laughing.

"I will not disguise from you," replied the stranger, mysteriously, "that it is in the name of a great person who is interested in the rebellion."

"And this mighty person himself, is he quite sure he will not be hanged?"

"If you knew to whom I allude, your doubts would cease."

"Ah; well, then, who is it?"

"That I cannot tell you."

Striking the stranger on the shoulder, the little man exclaimed, with a laugh:

"Shall I tell *you the name*?"

The stranger drew back, both from fear and disgust, as he was as little prepared for the direct question as the savage familiarity

"There, I am having a game with you," continued the man. "I know all about it. This mighty person is the Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway, and the grand chancellor is yourself."

This effectually was the case. When he reached the Ruins of Arbar, in company with Musdœmon, the grand chancellor hoped to convince the brigand without himself being recognized; and he never discovered how Han of Iceland had been so well informed. Had Musdœmon betrayed him? He had suggested the visit; but what could he gain by the treachery? Perhaps the brigand had found papers on one of his victims relating to the grand chancellor's project. None but Frederic d'Ahlefeld and Musdœmon knew of the plan; and however frivolous Frederic might

be, he would never reveal so weighty a matter. And, thought the chancellor, he is stationed at Munckholm. Count d'Ahlefeld had been taken by surprise at the sudden mention of his name, but he quickly recovered his presence of mind, and calmly continued :

"Yes, I wish to be frank with you. I am the chancellor. Now be equally open with me."

"Did I require much begging," said the other, with a laugh, "either to tell you my name or your own?"

"Be as frank in telling me how you knew it."

"Have you heard that Han of Iceland can see through a mountain?"

The count still persisted, saying :

"In me you have a friend."

"Give me your hand, Count d'Ahlefeld," said the little man roughly. "Now, if our two souls were to take flight, Satan would be puzzled as to which of us is the monster."

The haughty noble bit his lips; but between his fears of the brigand and the necessity of making him his tool, he considered it advisable to show no signs of displeasure.

"Don't play with your own interests; accept the command of the insurgents, and trust to my gratitude."

"Chancellor of Norway, you reckon on the success of your enterprise as an old woman does on the dress she is about weaving from stolen flax, little dreaming the cat has entangled the thread in its claws."

"Again I tell you to reflect before you reject my offer."

"Then once more *I*—the brigand—I tell you, grand chancellor of two kingdoms, *No*."

"I expected another answer, judging from the great service you have already rendered me."

"What service?"

"Did you not murder Captain Dispolsen?"

"That may be, Count d'Ahlefeld; I do not know him. Who is the man to whom you are alluding?"

"Do you mean to say that the iron casket in his charge has not fallen into your hands?"

This question evidently evoked some souvenir in the brigand's mind.

"I certainly do remember seeing this man with an iron casket at the Sands of Urchtal.

"If you could let me have that casket, my gratitude shall know no bounds. Tell me what has become of it. Is it still in your possession?"

The noble minister so persisted in his demand that the brigand was fairly astonished.

"Chancellor of Norway, this iron box then contains matters of the highest importance to your grace?"

"Yes."

"What am I to have if I tell you where to find it?"

"All that you can desire, my dear Han of Iceland."

"Well, then, I won't tell you."

"Now you are joking. Only think of the service you will render me."

"That is exactly what I *am* considering."

"You shall have wealth untold, and I will intercede with the king for your free pardon."

"Ask rather for your own. Now listen, Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway. Tigers never attack hyenas, so you shall leave here alive, for you are a villain, whose sole thought in life is to plan for man's misery, thus adding fresh crime to yourself. Go, but never attempt to return, for my hatred spares no one, not even criminals. Now don't flatter yourself I killed the captain on your account; why, his uniform condemned him. Nor was it to render you a service that I killed this other wretch, I assure you."

Thus saying, he drew the count by the arm toward the body lying in the shadow. The light from the lantern fell full on the mangled corpse of a man clothed in an officer's uniform of the Munkholm musketeers.

The chancellor shudderingly advanced, and beheld a blood-stained face, with its parted lips all blue, the eyes upturned, from which all light had fled. The count gave a piercing cry.

"Oh, God! my Frederic! my son!"

There is no doubt that in the most hardened sinner there is some hidden feeling, lost even to themselves amid a life of passion and vice—a mysterious witness proving a future avenger. It bides its time, remaining in the heart until the day it shows that crime shall know what anguish means. No ordinary misfortune can affect the wicked and selfish. Let some deep grief unexpectedly arise, then it eats into their very soul, and the affection, quite unknown even to themselves, will assert itself in all its depths and pain, stronger from its previous state of insensibility; but the sting of sorrow must probe the heart deeply. Nature has its rights, and the wretched creature in one short moment experiences all the agony which he has scoffed at for years. Tortured by conflicting emotions, in his despair he sees but hell in itself. Count d'Ahlefeld knew not till then how much he loved his son, for so he called him. Being ignorant of his wife's misconduct, the count looked upon

Frederic as his son and heir. Believing him to be at Munckholm, he little thought to find him in the Ruins of Arbar, there lying dead before his eyes, bathed in blood. The love for his son rose in full force with the certainty that he was lost beyond recall. Overcome by the fearful shock, he wrung his hands in anguish, crying :

"My son ! my son !"

The brigand laughed. It was horrible to hear the sound of laughter, mingled with the father's moans over the dead body of his son.

"By Ingulphus, my ancestor, you may cry out, Count d'Ahlefeld ; you will never awake him."

Suddenly his fearful countenance changed, and he added, solemnly :

"Cry over your son ; I have avenged mine."

He was interrupted by sounds of footsteps in the gallery. Four men, with drawn sword, rushed forward, followed by a short man in a brown cloak like the chancellor's, bearing a torch in one hand and a sword in the other.

"My lord," said Musdœmon, for it was he and four of the count's suite, "we heard your cry, and hastened to the rescue."

The new-comers, by the light from the torch, beheld with horror the frightful spectacle. On one side lay the remains of the wolf, wet with gore, and on the other the disfigured corpse of the young officer. In the midst the father with haggard face crying in his despair, and near to him the dreadful brigand's hideous countenance boldly confronting them. On seeing this unexpected reinforcement, the count drew his sword with a shout of vengeance.

"Death to this brigand ! He has murdered my son ! Death ! death ! I say !"

"Murdered Lord Frederic !" said Musdœmon, quite unmoved.

"Death ! death !" repeated the count furiously.

The six men rushed on to the brigand.

Surprised at the sudden attack, Han retreated to the precipice, giving a wild roar, far more of rage than fear.

His aggressors were fully armed, but he looked far more threatening. Compelled to keep on the defensive, he wielded his stone hatchet with such rapidity that it formed a complete buckler, against which the swords were vain. Weakened by his late encounter with the wolf, he was losing ground, and he soon found himself on the brink of the abyss.

!



"Courage, my friends!" cried the count; "let us dash the monster over the precipice."

"Before I can fall, look out for the planets to do so," replied the brigand.

On seeing the little man take a step backward down the stone flight, his adversaries followed with renewed ardor.

"Courage; press forward," urged the chancellor. "He must fall; one more effort, my friends. Ah! wretch, you have committed your last crime!"

The brigand still protected himself with the hatchet in one hand, while with the other he raised the horn from his belt, and blew several prolonged blasts.

The answering call at once came—a loud roar was soon heard proceeding from the abyss.

Just as the count and his followers were flattering themselves upon their success in having made the little man take another step downward, the enormous head of a white bear appeared behind him. The assailants drew back in surprise and fear. The bear mounted the steps, and confronted the foes with his open blood-stained mouth.

"Thanks, my brave Friend," exclaimed the brigand; and profiting by his adversaries' discomfiture he vaulted on to the bear's back. The animal descended with his threatening face turned toward his master's enemies.

Recovered from their surprise on seeing the bear effecting his escape with his burden, by grasping trunks of trees and projecting rocks, they endeavored to raise a block of granite, but before they could hurl it, the brigand and his strange beast had vanished into a cave.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SWORD AND GOWN.

What men term hazard is often to be found in profound reasoning. A mysterious hand seems to shape the course of existence. When we exclaim against the caprice of fortune or the strange turn of events, suddenly a storm will arise, or some bright ray will shed its beams on our lives, and human judgment sinks before nature's higher lesson.

The day after his visit to Munckholm the Governor of Drontheim called early for his carriage, hoping to leave before the Countess d'Ahlefeld was up.

The general had just concluded with the bishop, who was



to replace him as governor in the *interim*, and was on the point of starting, when the noble lady was announced. The old soldier could well stand fire, but not a woman's artifices. He made his adieus, hoping to escape further questioning.

The wicked countess leaned forward with an artful expression of countenance, meaning to impress him as purely confidential.

"Well, noble general, what did he say?"

"Who?—Poel? He said the carriage was waiting."

"I am speaking of the Munckholm prisoner."

"Ah!"

"Did he reply in a satisfactory manner?"

"But—yes—really, countess," said the general confusedly.

"Have you any proof of his complicity with the miners?"

"Noble lady, he is innocent!" exclaimed Levin.

Here he hesitated, for he knew that he spoke only according to his heart's dictates, and not according to his judgment.

"Innocent!" repeated the countess, in consternation, though still incredulous.

She feared Schumacker had satisfied the general, and his guilt proven was all important to the grand chancellor.

The governor had had time to reflect, and his hesitating reply was reassuring to the countess.

"Innocent—yes—if you wish."

"If I wish, my noble general!" said she, laughing.

"Countess," said he, annoyed at her laughter, "with all due deference, I must tell you that the details of my interview with the ex-grand chancellor are for the viceroy's ears alone."

With a profound bow he retired.

"Yes, go," repeated the countess to herself, once within her own apartment, "you knight-errant, the protector of our enemies. May your departure be the signal of my Frederic's return. Fancy sending the handsomest cavalier in Copenhagen to those horrible mountains! There will be no difficulty now in having him recalled.

"Lisbeth," continued she, addressing her favorite attendant, "order a couple of dozen small combs from Berghen, now worn by beaus in the hair, and Scudery's last novel. My dear son's monkey must have a rose-water bath every morning."

"My gracious mistress, can Lord Frederic then return?"

"Yes. I must fulfill his wishes ; he will then be pleased to see me. Besides, I want to surprise him."  
Poor mother !

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## BEELZEBUB HIMSELF.

Orderer, wearied with seeking his poor guide, Benignus Spiagudry, left the tower whence he had perceived Munckholm beacon. The ruins but echoed his calls. He was surprised, but in no way alarmed, at the man's disappearance, attributing it to fright ; he therefore blamed himself for leaving him, and decided on passing the night on the rocks, to give his guide the time to return.

After some slight refreshment, he wrapped his cloak around him, and lay down near the few remaining embers. Pressing Ethel's hair to his lips, he soon fell asleep. Even amid great anxiety sleep comes to a clear conscience.

At sunrise Orderer resumed his search, but he only found Spiagudry's cloak and wallet in the tower, showing evidently marks of a hasty retreat. Despairing to find him on the rock, he left, in order to keep his appointment with Han of Iceland at Walderhog on the morrow. Orderer was accustomed to a wandering and adventurous life, and as he was well acquainted with Northern Norway, he wanted no guide to the brigand's retreat. He went forth on his solitary journey, with no Benignus Spiagudry to give him information concerning the quartz in the mountains, or the various traditions of the country. He traveled for a whole day across the mountains, running from North to South of Norway down to the sea, which give to the coast a succession of promontories and gulfs. Inland mountains and valleys follow one upon another to such an extent that Norway is compared to the backbone of a fish. Such a country is not easy to cross, and Orderer would wander for hours without meeting a living creature, and with no signs of life beyond the sails of a windmill in the distance, or the faint hammering from a forge. He met a fur merchant in his sleigh drawn by a reindeer ; a long rope with innumerable knots was attached behind the sleigh, and allowed to drag on the road, in order to frighten the wolves. The merchant informed Orderer concerning his own line of country, but nothing further. The peasantry gave one and the same answer.

"Walderhog Grotto ! Why, there even stones dance,

bones dance. It is where the devil of Iceland lives. Surely you don't mean to go to Walderhog?"

"Yes, certainly."

"You must have lost your mother, or your farm is burnt down, or your neighbor has stolen your fat pig?"

"No," replied the young man.

"Then you have been bewitched?"

"My good man, I want you to tell me the way to Walderhog."

"I am giving you the answer, my lord. Adieu. Go to the north. I know well enough how you can get there, but I am very doubtful how you will return," said the peasant, making the sign of the cross.

Fine and penetrating rain added to the unpleasantness of the journey, and it was night when the traveler arrived at Surb, where Spiagudry wished to make his headquarters. He knew he was among fishermen, from the smell of tar and charcoal that came through the outlet of the hut, an opening covered with the skin of large fish, the custom in Norway, through which the fire could plainly be seen. Knocking, he added, "It is a traveler."

"Come in, come in," was the reply, and the skin was raised from within to admit him.

Ordener found himself in a round, cone-like cabin, built of wood and clay, the usual style of a fisherman's hut in Norway, with a wood fire in the center, near which were gathered the fisherman, with his wife and two children. A couple of deer were fast asleep on a bed of leaves and skins, surrounded by nets and oars. The young man met with a kindly welcome, for the Norwegian peasants gladly greet a traveler, partly from curiosity, but mostly from their love of hospitality.

"Your lordship must be both hungry and cold," said they, hastening to offer him salt fish flavored with whale oil, and some of their black bread, adding, "if he could remain until their brother's return, he, being a great sportsman, would come well stocked with game."

"My brother, the famous Kennybol," said the wife, "is the finest sportsman out, and a traveler like yourself, and I hope to see you enjoy some of his food here together."

"Many thanks, my kind hostess, but I will content myself with your salt fish and black bread; my time being limited, I must hasten onward."

"Must you leave us so soon? and are you going to venture across the mountains in such weather and at such an hour?"

"My business is urgent."

The young man's answer aroused their curiosity, and when Norwegian peasants are anxious to know a stranger's name, they begin by telling their own.

"You are now with Christopher Buldus Braall, fisherman, and Maase Kennybol, his wife."

"And I," replied Ordener, "am a traveler neither sure of his name nor of his way."

Braall was somewhat dissatisfied with this singular reply, and he added :

"I thought there was but one man in Norway who was not sure of his name—the noble Baron of Thorwick, who takes the title of Count Danneskiold on his marriage with the chancellor's daughter. This is the latest news from Drontheim. Allow me to congratulate you, my lord, on your position being similar to that of the viceroy's son, Count Guldenlew. As you can give us no information relating to yourself, you know perhaps more particulars relating to this union which is about to be celebrated between the viceroy's son and the grand chancellor's daughter?"

"I doubt it," said Ordener.

"I had the news from the best authority—Poel, the noble Baron Thorwick's valet. Has anything occurred during the last week to upset the marriage?"

"I believe so," replied the young man, smiling.

"Who could have told you?"

"No one ; I arranged all that myself."

Forgetting their native courtesy, they burst into a laugh, immediately adding :

"A thousand pardons, but you are evidently a wag, by saying that you can turn the tide of events, or control the weather." The fisherman here entered into a long dissertation about the marriage. The conversation became somewhat embarrassing until the brother's arrival.

"Why, brother," said Kennybol, after saluting the stranger, "I have had as poor sport on your coast as you would find fishing in our mountains," throwing a woodcock on the table. "I have been all this time, and brought down nothing but that wretched bird ; not worth a shot ! Kennybol's faithful musket," muttered he, "will soon aim at tougher game, in the shape of green jackets."

"What were you saying, brother?" asked Maase, piqued with curiosity.

"Eve's daughters are always inquisitive," said Braall ; "but were you not speaking just now of green jackets?"

The miner's revolt is the talk of the village; do you know anything about it?"

"Silence!" said the mountaineer, glancing at the stranger.

"If you fast now," added the sportsman, anxious to turn the conversation, "you shall soon have your fish flavored with bear's grease—for about two miles from Surb I saw a white one, carrying a man or rather an animal on his back, and not as usual, with his prey in his jaws. The animal lay so still that it must have been dead, or it would have made an effort to release itself."

"How could it keep on the bear's back if it were dead," replied the fisherman.

"I can't understand it, but at all events, with the help of six comrades I will bring you, Maase, the finest white fur ever seen in the mountains."

"Where did you see this bear?"

"Going toward Smiasen, near Walderhog."

"Walderhog! You are not going there?" said the woman, terrified.

"Not I; for even a bear would scarce venture into such a grotto."

They all three made the sign of the cross.

"My worthy hosts, what is there so alarming at Walderhog? for it is precisely there I am going."

They were for the moment dumfounded.

"Good Heavens! You are going to Walderhog! Why, he talks of it as coolly as we should going out herring fishing or selling codfish. You unfortunate man!" exclaimed the wife; "have you no patron saint? Of course you can't have, as you don't seem to know your own name."

"What motive takes you to such a place?" inquired the mountaineer.

"I have a few words to say to some one there."

"You are evidently a stranger in these parts. You will find no human being there."

"Only the devil," added the woman, "who causes the tombs to echo and the dead to dance."

"Beelzebub himself is the only inhabitant," said Kennybol.

"I really do not understand you. I heard that Han of Iceland lived there."

"He is the devil!" cried the three, with horror.

"As I have made up my mind to go, the greatest kindness you can do me is to show me the shortest way."

"You are bent on gaining the reward of a thousand crowns



set on the devil of Iceland's head?" exclaimed the fisherman.

"A far higher interest than that," replied Ordener, "makes me seek this brigand."

"Is it not for Count Schumacker of Griffenfeld?" said Kennybol, in a low tone, drawing near. "If so, I wish you every success. You are, indeed, a brave fellow, to try thus to serve the oppressed. I trust you will be successful at Walderhog. Like yourself, I am devoted to the prisoner of Munckholm."

Turning to the fisherman, he added :

"Brother, Sister Maase, treat this young man as one of us. Now, supper must be ready."

"You have then persuaded him to forego his visit to the devil?" said the woman.

"Sister, pray that no harm may befall him, for he is most noble and worthy. Come," said he, turning to Ordener, "partake of something, and then rest yourself. Tomorrow I will be your guide, and we will go together—you in search of the devil, and I for the bear."

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE DEMON AT BAY.

A fisherman, who was casting his nets at sunrise, suddenly saw a figure wrapped in a cloak or shroud disappear into the grotto of Walderhog. Commending his soul to St. Usuph, he fled in terrified surprise.

The specter was Ordener.

Onward fearlessly he went, passing with indifference from one scene to another, from King Walder's tomb, with its many gloomy traditions, to a heap of fractured skulls and jaws.

At length he reached the room at the end of the grotto, where his attention was attracted to a singular monument, composed of three long stones, placed upright, forming the pedestal to a large and square block. This was surmounted by a mass of granite, having a hole in the center, thus making a kind of altar. The very weight of the stones kept them together—a sort of Druidical monument, frequently seen in Norway.

As the young man leaned on the altar, stained with human blood, he wondered the brigand had not made his appearance.

He was suddenly startled by a voice, seeming to echo from the stones :

"Young man, you have come here only to tread on your own grave."

"And ready to handle a sword."

The monster came forward from the altar, and showed himself in all his hideousness, armed with his stone hatchet.

"It is I," said he, growling like a wild beast.

"It is I," exclaimed Ordener.

"I was waiting for you."

"I was doing more—I was in search of you."

"Do you know who I am?" said the brigand, folding his arms.

"Yes."

"And you are not afraid?"

"No."

"You felt no fear in coming here?" said the monster, with a triumphant toss of the head.

"Only that of not meeting you."

"You dare to brave me! Why, on your way your feet knocked against human skulls!"

"To-morrow they my kick yours."

"Beware!" muttered the brigand. "I will come down on you as Norwegian hail serves a traveler."

Ordener's very look in return for a moment influenced the monster.

"You teach me what pity means."

"And you the meaning of contempt."

"Child, your voice and face are like a girl's. Now, what death have you chosen?"

"Yours."

"Are you aware that I am a demon, imbued with the soul of Ingulphus the Exterminator?"

"I know you are a brigand, and only murder for the sake of gold."

"There you are wrong. I do it for blood."

"Where you not paid by the D'Ahlefelds to murder Captain Dispolsen?"

"What are you talking about? What names are those?"

"You did not know Captain Dispolsen, whom you murdered on the Urchtal Sands?"

"That may be, but I have forgotten him, as I shall have forgotten you in three days."

"And you don't know Count d'Ahlefeld, who paid you to get possession of the iron casket from the captain?"

"D'Ahlefeld? Yes. I ought to know him, for I drank his son's blood out of my own son's skull."

"The wages of your sin, then, did not content you," said Ordener, horrified.

"What hire?"

"The very sight of you oppresses me. Now listen. Eight days ago you stole an iron casket from one of your victims, a Munckholm musketeer."

"A Munckholm officer!" said the monster savagely.

"Are you then a musketeer?"

"No."

"More's the pity."

"Once again I say, where is the casket you stole from the captain?"

"There is much concern about this same iron casket; a good deal more than will be made after your bones, that is if they are gathered into a coffin, which is doubtful."

"Tell me what you have done with the casket." For Ordener plainly saw that the brigand remembered it. "Is it in Count d'Ahlefeld's hands?"

"No."

"You lie, for you are laughing."

"Think what you like! what care I?"

"I will make you give me up that casket," said the young man firmly.

The monster answered, with a hoarse laugh:

"Are you accustomed to order bulls and bears?"

"I will order the devil, even in Hades!"

"You will soon be able to do that."

"Obey," said Ordener, drawing his sword.

"Why, as soon as you entered," said the other, brandishing his hatchet, "I could have smashed your bones and drank your blood, but I was curious to see how the sparrow would pounce upon the vulture."

"Wretch! defend yourself!"

"It is the first time I have been told to do so," muttered the brigand, grinding his teeth with rage as he vaulted on to the altar, prepared like a wild beast to make a spring.

Ordener wisely wrapped his cloak round his left arm, and made a thrust at the monster's face.

The little man, standing on the altar, looked like some horrible idol, to whom sacrifices were offered in the dark ages. His movements were so rapid, that from whatever point the young man attacked, he ever faced him, and parried the blows with his hatchet. Useless efforts were made on both sides to get the best of the encounter, when the

little man shouted with rage, for the head of his ax had caught in the folds of Ordener's cloak. The more he tried to disengage the weapon, the tighter the cloak twisted round it.

"Listen!" said Ordener, triumphantly pressing the point of his sword on the monster's chest. "Give me that iron box you stole."

"Curse you, no!"

"Reflect."

"No! I tell you; no!"

"Well, then," nobly said the young man, lowering his sword, "free your hatchet, and defend yourself."

The monster smiled disdainfully.

"Child, you are acting a generous part; as though I wanted it!" And placing one foot on his conqueror's shoulder, he bounded to the floor, then with a spring he dug his nails into Ordener's shoulder, entwined himself round him, showing a blood-stained mouth and teeth, like those of a wild beast ready to tear its prey, yet more hideous than beast, more monstrous than a devil—a man bereft of all that was human.

The stone monument helped Ordener to withstand the rude shock. Quickly shortening his sword, he plunged it into the brigand's back. The monster soon disengaged himself, and springing backward, cast huge stones at his adversary, but vainly tried to reach him. Sword in hand, Ordener made another thrust at the little man, who hurled a huge block of stone, and broke the sword in pieces.

"Have you anything to say to God or the devil before you die?" cried the monster, freeing the hatchet from its entanglement, and trembling with impatience.

"Poor Ethel!"

The monster hesitated, for sounds were heard in the distance—the clamor of men's voices, mingled with the plaintive cry of a bear. The brigand listened, then made a rush with his hatchet, not on Ordener, but toward the glade whence the sounds proceeded. There he saw a huge white bear at bay against seven armed huntsmen.

"Friend! Friend! here I am to the rescue."

Ordener, even at that distance, could distinguish the huntsman Kennybol who had so impressed him.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## DEVOURED ALIVE.

A regiment of Munckholm musketeers marched toward Skongen. Their long line of bayonets looked like the scales of a huge serpent. The men themselves seemed ill at ease. Like most soldiers, their happiness consisted in active service, but constant marching was not to their liking.

"Well, captain," said Lieutenant Radmer, a young Danish baron, to old Lory, a soldier of fortune, "why are you so low spirited?"

"I have lost my wealth—my all."

"You can't be worse off than I am. I lost my splendid Castle of Radmer and its appendages to Lieutenant Alberick with just one throw of the dice. I am ruined, but none the less gay for all that."

"Lieutenant, you may have lost your castle, but I have lost my dog. You may regain your castle, but my Drake can never be restored to me. Why, to honor the admiral, I called my dog after him. The poor thing had saved my life during the war. And to think he should have gone through so much with me, and then to be drowned like a cat in that cursed Drontheim Gulf! My good dog! my brave friend! Worthy to die like myself on the battlefield."

"Don't be down-hearted, captain; we shall perhaps be fighting to-morrow."

"Yes, against brigands of miners, and devils of mountaineers, stone-cutters and highwaymen. Worthy enemies for a man who went all through the Pomeranian and Holstein wars, besides others, and fought under General Schack and brave Count Guldenlew!"

"But their leader is the renowned giant, strong as Goliath, a brigand who drinks human blood, a perfect devil—the famous Han of Iceland!"

"I'll wager this wonderful general can neither use a musket nor carbine with any amount of skill."

Radmer laughed.

"You may laugh. Just fancy crossing a good sword with an old pick-ax! Why, my brave Drake would have scorned even taking such enemies by the leg!"



"Captain Lory! my dear Radmer!" said an officer, coming in quite out of breath, "I am so horrified—d'Ahlefeld, the chancellor's son Frederic, the dandy, the——"

"Well, you quite frighten me. What is the matter?" said Lory. "Has our dandy failed, as usual, in his duty, for which he is put under arrest?"

"Captain Lory! Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld has been devoured alive."

Both men looked at each other. Radmer burst out laughing, saying:

"You were always good at a joke, but this tale is really beyond belief."

"I tell you d'Ahlefeld is dead. I had it from the colonel."

"Oh! he is amusing," said the baron, still laughing; "how well he plays his part! Did this poor devil make a wolf's breakfast, a buffalo's luncheon, or a supper for a bear?"

"The colonel has received dispatches saying that Walkstrom is retreating before a large body of insurgents; that Lieutenant Frederic d'Ahlefeld was carried off from the mountains by Han of Iceland into his grotto, and there devoured by the monster."

"What! the colonel of the brigands?" cried the old officer.

"This ogre, this vampire, who has carried off and eaten a lieutenant, will not require much practice with the carbine, my brave Lory, since he can so well use his jaws," said Radmer mockingly.

"Baron Radmer, you are much like d'Ahlefeld; beware, lest you share the same fate."

Three other officers deeply engaged in conversation now approached the group. Radmer laughingly repeated what he considered but a tale.

His news was received with cries of indignation.

"So you can laugh at such a misfortune, at something so truly horrible!"

"Is it then really true?" said Radmer, utterly dismayed.

"Our colonel has just received the fatal news, and we shall soon be fighting against wolves and bears with human faces."

"Our regiment is indeed unfortunate; d'Ahlefeld's terrible death, those poor musketeers found dead at Carcadthymon, Dispolsen's murder, all in so short a time."

"I can hardly realize it," said Radmer, who had been dumfounded. "Frederic, who was such good a dancer!"

With this profound reflection he relapsed into silence.

Old Lory was much affected by the young lieutenant's death; some of his decorations shone less bright than usual.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE RASH INTRUDER.

How fearful it is to travel alone in a bare and desolate country, with nothing but sad thoughts, and to have reached the journey's end with no result! Ordener, in trying to follow the brigand, lost his way. Wearied with fatigue and anxiety, he dreaded facing Schumacker without the assurance of Ethel's safety. What was the nature of the contents of this fatal iron box? He thought of his marriage with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld! Ah! if he could but rescue Ethel and fly with her! Such were his reflections as he drew his coat around him and lay down. Hearing voices, he turned toward the place, and saw by a light then burning a group of men. In another instant all had disappeared. Ordener was not superstitious, but he crossed himself, and went to the very spot so lately occupied. He must have fallen into a large pit had a flash of lightning not illumined the scene. He leaned forward and clearly perceived a brilliant light shining from the depths of the cavern, and distinctly heard the sound of voices. One feeling predominated, doubtless the dictate of fate—to follow these specters into the very jaws of hell! Besides, he would be sheltered from the rising storm. Ordener, by the light of another flash, saw that bars of iron were placed from side to side to the very bottom of the pit, for the use of those venturesome enough to risk descending such a depth.

Ordener never hesitated for a moment, but at once descended. As he neared the end of his precipitous journey he plainly distinguished a red flickering light, and he was struck with hearing these words:

"Kennybol has not then arrived?" said a voice, impatiently; "what can have detained him?"

"We cannot account for it, Master Hacket. He was to pass the night at his sister's, Maase Braall, at Surb."

"I keep my appointments," said Hacket. "I promised you Han of Iceland as commander, and here he is. What matters it, friends Jonas and Norbith, if Kennybol be late?"

Our forces are strong enough. We have nothing to fear. Have you your flag from Crag with you?"

"Yes," replied several voices.

"Raise the standard! Onward to noble Schumacker's deliverance, the unfortunate Count Griffenfeld. Here is gold! here is an invincible chief!"

"Long live Schumacker!" cried the crowd, and echo caught up the sound.

Ordener could hardly believe his ears. Schumacker's name mingled with Kennybol's! with Han of Iceland! Whom were they defending? whose head was to pay the penalty?

"I am the friend and confidant of the noble Count of Griffenfeld," continued Hacket. "Friends, give me the same confidence. Fortune favors us, for you will reach Drontheim without meeting a single enemy."

"March on, Master Hacket? but Peters saw the entire regiment from Munckholm making toward us."

"He has deceived you," said the other, authoritatively; "the government is yet ignorant of your revolt, and such is the feeling of security that the one so deaf to all your pleadings, your oppression, the unfortunate General Levin of Knud, has left Drontheim to attend the wedding of Ordener Guldenlew with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld."

Imagine Ordener's surprise on hearing names so deeply interesting to him pronounced by strangers in such a place. He could hardly believe his ears—that his Ethel's father should excite revolt, be mixed up with Kennybol and Han of Iceland against the king. Was it for this hypocrite, this rebel, that he, the viceroy's son, General Levin's pupil, had sacrificed both his life and his future prospects? Perhaps even this very iron box, which he had risked his life to obtain, only contained secrets affecting this shameful plot? And the Munckholm prisoner, with full knowledge of his name, had urged him on to this fatal journey only to compass his death.

Pursued by such thoughts, all hope seemed to have fled. Something in this pretended envoy's tone and manner seemed suspicious, although the unfortunate mountaineers he was sent to deceive would scarcely detect the hollowness.

"Who will dare to oppose you," continued the envoy, "when you are commanded by the formidable Han of Iceland? You fight for your wives, your children, and for the unhappy nobleman so unjustly imprisoned for the last twenty years."

"Onward for Schumacker and liberty! War to the tyrants."

"War!" repeated a thousand voices, amid the clank of arms.

"Stop!" cried Ordener, rushing among the insurgents, filled with the idea of saving his country so much misery.

"A stranger! Death to him! Death!" cried all.

"Wait! wait!" cried the envoy, a short, fat man in black, with a false look about him. "Who are you?" said he, addressing Ordener.

The latter made no reply, for he was threatened on every side by men armed with swords and pistols.

"Are you afraid?" added the man, smiling.

The young man coolly answered :

"If your hand were on my heart, instead of these swords, you would find it beats no faster than your own, supposing you have one."

"Let him die, since he is so proud," said the man, turning away.

"I ask for nothing more at your hands."

"One minute, Master Hacket," said an old man. "You are now in my quarters, and I alone can decree this man's death."

"Just as you please, my dear Jonas. Provided the spy dies, I care little who is the judge."

Turning to Ordener, the old man said :

"Who are you, who has dared to venture here?"

Ordener still remained silent.

"So you refuse to answer? The fox is unearthed, and he can say nothing for himself. Kill him."

"My brave Jonas," said Hacket, "let this be Han of Iceland's first exploit."

A giant in the costume of a mountaineer advanced toward Ordener, with a stupid expression of countenance, and asked for a hatchet.

"You are not Han of Iceland," said the young man, boldly.

"Death to him! Death to him! Death, I say!" cried Hacket furiously.

Ordener, feeling his days were numbered, sought to press a tress of Ethel's hair once more to his lips. In doing so a paper fell to the ground.

"Seize that packet," said Hacket.

"Good Heaven!" cried Norbith. "Why, this is poor Christopher Nedlans' pass; our unfortunate comrade who was executed a week ago."

"Keep your scrap of paper," said Hacket. "Now, Han of Iceland, dispatch your man."

"This stranger is under my protection," said Norbith, a noble-looking young man, "and the safe-conduct assured him by my friend shall be respected."

Orderer now remembered with shame how he had despised old Athanasius Munder's words:

"May the gift of the dying prove a blessing to the traveler."

"Bah! bah!" said Hacket; "you are talking nonsense, Norbith. This man is a spy, and he must die."

"Give me my hatchet," repeated the giant.

"He shall not die," said Norbith.

"You are right. We cannot kill a stranger when he has a pass from Nedlans," added Jonas.

The others re-echoed the words.

Hacket, finding he was losing ground, said, with concentrated rage:

"Let him live. Besides, this is your affair."

"If he were the devil himself, I would not kill him," cried Norbith. Turning to Orderer, he continued:

"You must be a good fellow, or my poor friend would never have given you his pass. We are loyal miners. The tax has caused us to revolt. Master Hacket says we are in arms for a certain Count Schumacker, but I do not know him. Stranger, ours is a just cause. Now, answer me as though you were addressing your patron saint. Will you join us?"

"Yes," said Orderer, taking the sword from Norbith, with a feeling hard to describe.

"Brother," said the young chief, "if you think of betraying us, commence by killing me."

Suddenly the sound of a horn and voices were heard from a distance, shouting: "Here is Kennybol!"

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE CREDULOUS HUNTER.

Who can account for the promptings of the soul? It would be difficult to analyze the mingled feelings which impelled the Viceroy of Norway's son to join bandits in open revolt for an outlaw. One thing was certain, that a clear-sighted friend of Schumacker's in the midst of such blind partisans, would be of great service.



Hacket rushed forward, saying :

"My dear Kennybol, let me present to you the formidable Han of Iceland."

"Han of Iceland !" said Kennybol, who had arrived pale and breathless, with his hands covered in blood.

"Yes," said Hacket. "Look upon him as a friend who has come to help us. Surely you are not going to be afraid of him?"

"And you tell me," repeated the sportsman, "that Han of Iceland is here, in this mine?"

"Is our brave Kennybol mad?" said Hacket, turning to the others. "It is the fear of Han of Iceland which has delayed him."

"Master Hacket, by St. Etheldera, I have not been delayed by fear of Han of Iceland, but by Han of Iceland himself."

"What are you talking about?" replied Hacket, with a scowl.

"Had it not been for your cursed Han of Iceland I should have been here. Never again will I chase a white bear."

"What has occurred? Were you, then, nearly devoured?"

"I, Kennybol, devoured by a bear!" retorted he, disdainfully. "Whom do you take me for, Master Hacket? If you knew what I have gone through, you would hesitate even to name Han of Iceland here."

Hacket, for a moment disconcerted, took hold of Kennybol's arm, to prevent him going within earshot of the giant.

"Pray, tell us the cause of your delay? Every detail, at such a time, is of the gravest importance."

Kennybol then related how he, with six others, had pursued a white bear to the famous Walderhog Grotto, and how the bear's cries at bay had brought a little man to the rescue, a perfect monster—a demon—armed with a stone hatchet.

This devil's sudden appearance, who could be no other than Han, the island demon, transfixed them all with terror. His six comrades fell victims to the two monsters, and he, Kennybol, owed his safety to flight, and the protection of the hunter's patron saint, Sylvestra.

"Therefore, Master Hacket, it is a matter of impossibility that the devil I left with his bear, tearing my poor companions to pieces, could now be here in this mine.

Having once seen him, I should know this incarnate fiend again."

"My brave Kennybol, I was aware of all you have related. To Han or Satan nothing is impossible. Han of Iceland on his way here mentioned the adventure, without naming you as the hero."

"Really?" said Kennybol, looking at Hacket with mingled feelings of respect and fear.

"Yes; and I will now present you to the formidable Han of Iceland, your chief. I should advise you," said Hacket, meaningly, "not to allude to this morning's adventure."

Kennybol followed with visible reluctance. Turning to do so, he perceived Ordener between Jonas and Norbith. He hastened to shake hands with him, saying:

"Welcome, good sir. Your boldness has then succeeded?"

"You know this stranger?" exclaimed Norbith.

"By my guardian angel, I know him. I have the greatest regard and respect for him, for, like ourselves, he is devoted to the cause we serve."

Hacket now came forward with the giant, saying:

"My brave hunter, Kennybol, this is your chief, the famous Han."

"Master Hacket," whispered Kennybol, looking in amazement at the gigantic brigand, "the Han of Iceland I left at Walderhog this morning was a short man."

Hacket repeated in a solemn manner:

"You forget—a demon. You understand?"

"Ah! that is true; of course he may have taken another form," said the credulous hunter, making the sign of the cross.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE ASTROLOGER'S PAPERS.

In the depths of the forest, early one morning, an interview took place between a man of mean stature and one who was there awaiting to receive his report.

"Kennybol, chief of the mountaineers, only arrived at midnight. An unexpected witness had previously appeared most suddenly on the scene, whom I took for a spy, and voted for his immediate death. But he had a pass from a friend of the miners, and they protected him.

I have taken every precaution, although he is doubtless only a traveler in quest of information."

"Does all go well?"

"Very much so. The miners are under Norbith and old Jonas. The mountaineers, commanded by Kennybol, should now be on the march. Four miles from this their comrades from Hubfalls and Sund-Moer will join them, and farther onward the blacksmiths and others, who forced the garrison of Wahlstrom to retreat. This very night, my dear and honored master, the whole of the insurgents will be encamped two miles from Skongen."

"How did they receive your Han of Iceland?"

"With perfect trust."

"Ah! what a pity the monster escaped us. If I could but avenge my poor son's death."

"Milord, make use of Han of Iceland's name to be avenged on Schumacker. Then we can plan how to be revenged on Han himself."

"Why allow the insurgents to assemble in such force so near Skongen, Musdœmon?"

"The greater the insurrection, milord, the greater merit in quelling it, and the deeper Schumacker's crime. All must be done at one blow, and Colonel Vœthaun, now quartered at Skongen with his regiment, should at once know, my noble count, that the insurgents will be encamped to-night near the Black Pillar, two miles from Skongen. There is no other part in the mountains so well suited for an ambush, and the only insurgents who will leave that place alive will be those we intend to hand over to justice."

"Well planned, Musdœmon. All is not so satisfactory in other ways. We have made a fruitless search after those papers Dispolsen carried. Then again, that cursed astrologer, Cumbysulmum, just before his death, gave Schumacker's agent some papers."

"Damnation! They were my letters, detailing the whole of our plan."

"Your plan, Musdœmon."

"Thousand pardons, noble count. But why have consulted that charlatan Cumbysulmum?—the old traitor."

"Listen, Musdœmon. I am not like yourself, with neither belief nor faith in anything. I have had good reason to place reliance in old Cumbysulmum's magical science."

"It is a pity your grace's confidence in his knowledge was not coupled with equal doubt as to his fidelity. After

all, it little matters. Dispolsen is dead, the papers lost. In a few more days there will be no more question of those for whose service they were intended."

"In any case, what suspicions could fall on me?"

"Or myself, protected by your grace?"

"Oh! of course, you can always depend on me. I will at once dispatch a messenger to the colonel. Let us hasten to Drontheim. Serve me well, and, in spite of all the Cumbysulmums and Dispolsens on earth, I will stand by you through all and everything."

Their voices were soon lost in the depths of the forest.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM.

During this time the insurgents left the mine. Ordener made every effort to be with Kennybol, but he was placed under Norbith. At sunrise he was better able to survey this curious army, whose wild shouts resembled a pack of wolves in full cry. The mountaineers, dressed in animals' skins, marched to the front; then followed the miners, in large felt hats and loose trousers, with bare arms and black faces, armed with any tools or weapons which came to hand, and carrying fiery-looking banners, on which were the words, "Long live Schumacker!" "Freedom to our Deliverer!" "Liberty to the Miners!" "Freedom for Count Griffenfeld!" "Death to Guldenlew!" "Death to the Oppressors!" "Death to d'Ahlefeld!" The rebels bore the banners more as burdens than ornaments, passing them from one to another. The advance guard was led by Hacket, in company with the giant, who went forward alone, armed with a hatchet and a club. At some distance followed Kennybol's company, watching anxiously their diabolical giant-chief, fearful lest he should assume another form. The army was soon increased by the arrival of various bands of men, and a strong body of blacksmiths, offering a strange contrast, with their crowbars, hammers, and leather aprons. For ensign they carried a large wooden cross. They marched along to the tune of psalms and hymns.

Thus onward they went without meeting a single soul, for all fled before them.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## NO QUARTER GIVEN.

Everything was now prepared at Countess d'Ahlefeld's residence for Lieutenant Frederic's return. Monkey, ribbons, combs, perfume, patches, the last of Scudery's novels, most richly bound—all were placed at hand on an elegant toilet-table. In making these preparations for her dear son, the countess had been distracted from the ever-revengeful thoughts which pursued her. With General Levin's departure, all hope of defense, both for Schumacker and Ethel was gone, and she was free to compass their destruction. Who could the vassal or peasant be who had gained the love of the ex-chancellor's daughter? What communication had Baron Ordener with the Munckholm prisoners? Why was he absent at such a time, when both kingdoms talked of nothing but his marriage with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, whom he treated with such contempt? Besides, what had taken place between Levin of Knud and Schumacker? The countess was lost in vain conjectures. She decided to go to Munckholm—partly out of curiosity, and at the same time to study her interests.

One evening, as Ethel was strolling in the prison garden, the door opened, and a tall, pale-looking woman, dressed in white, stood before her. Ethel was startled, for since her nurse's death she had never seen a woman within Munckholm walls.

"My child," said the stranger, sweetly, "you are the daughter of Munckholm's prisoner!"

There was such a ring of falsehood in the very tone that Ethel felt no sympathy toward this stranger.

"I am Ethel Schumacker. My father tells me that when an infant I was called Countess of Tongsberg and Princess of Wollin."

"Your father tells you that?" cried the countess. Then quickly recovering herself, she added: "You have experienced heavy misfortunes?"

"At my birth sorrow received me in its arms, and my father fears that in death alone I shall find relief."

The stranger smiled, but added, in a pitying tone:



"Do you not curse the author of your misfortunes?"

"No; lest the curse should recoil on my own head."

"Do you know the names of your persecutors?"

Ethel, after a moment's reflection, replied:

"All is done by God's will."

"Does your father ever mention the king?"

"The king? I pray for him both night and morning, although I have never seen him."

To Ethel's surprise the stranger bit her lips at this reply.

"Has your father never mentioned his implacable enemies to you: General Arensdorf, Bishop Spollyson, and Chancellor d'Ahlefeld?"

"I never heard of them."

"Nor Levin de Knud?"

"Levin de Knud?" exclaimed Ethel, remembering the recent scene. "He is a man for whom my father has the greatest affection and respect, warmly defending him lately against the Governor of Drontheim."

"There is some mystery here," murmured the lady. "My dear child, tell me what took place between your father and the Governor of Drontheim."

"Am I a criminal, that you thus question me?" said poor Ethel.

"If you knew my reason for coming, you would not answer me in that way."

"Do you come from him? Have you a message for me?" said Ethel, flushing with anxiety and impatience.

"From whom?"

The young girl was about to announce the name of the adored one, when she was struck with the fiendish expression in her visitor's face, and added, mournfully:

"You cannot know him."

"Poor girl. What can I do for you?"

Ethel's thoughts were far away, and she did not hear the remark.

"Does your father ever hope to leave here?"

"Yes," Ethel tearfully replied.

"He then hopes to do so, does he?" eagerly questioned the stranger. "By what means? When?"

"He looks forward to death as a release from prison."

"Now listen. Your father will shortly be brought to justice, when an inquiry will be instituted concerning his suspected complicity in this revolt of the miners."

To Ethel the words "revolt," "inquiry," presented no idea.

"Your father has conspired against the State. His crime is all but proved. If convicted, he will be condemned to death."

"Death! crime. My poor father conspire! He, whose time passes in hearing me read the Edda or the Gospe. ! What has he done to you that you should thus speak of him?"

"Don't look at me in that way—I am no enemy. I am simply warning you that your father is suspected of a serious crime. Instead of hatred, I have a claim on your gratitude."

Ethel felt the reproach, and replied :

"Oh, pardon me, noble lady, for the doubt. But we have always been surrounded by enemies."

"What! have you never met with a single friend?" said the stranger, smiling.

The girl blushed, and hesitated.

"Yes, noble lady; we have met with one friend."

"Name him. It is of the utmost importance you should do so. Your father's safety depends upon it."

"I do not know his name."

"I am anxious to serve you, yet you trifle with me. Your father's very life depends upon your telling me this friend's name."

"God knows that I can tell you but one, that is Ordener."

"Ordener! Ordener!" repeated the stranger, with emotion. "What is his father's name."

"I do not know. What matters who his father is, or to which family he belongs? This Ordener, lady, is the most noble of men," said Ethel, rapturously.

The stranger had now learned Ethel's secret.

"Have you heard of the approaching marriage of the viceroy's son with Grand Chancellor d'Ahlefeld's daughter?"

"Yes, I fancy so," answered Ethel, indifferently.

"What do you think of it?"

"I have not thought about it. May it be a happy union."

"Your father's greatest enemies are Count Guldenlew and Count d'Ahlefeld, the parents of the betrothed."

"May their children's union prove a happy one."

"On such an occasion as this grand marriage you might get the viceroy's son to obtain your father's pardon?"

"May the saints reward you for your kind thought, but how can my prayers reach the viceroy's son?"

"What! do you not know him?"

"So great a man? You forget, lady, that I have never been beyond this fortress."

"Not know him! impossible!" muttered the countess. "You must have seen the viceroy's son, for he has been here."

"Very likely. Of all those who have been here, I have seen but one—my Ordener."

"Your Ordener!" said the lady, heedless of Ethel's blushes. "Do you know an elegant-looking young man, with fair complexion and brown hair?"

"It is he—my betrothed, my adored Ordener! Dear lady, have you brought me news of him? Where did you see him last? He must have told you how he loved me. Is it not so? He has my whole heart. Alas! a wretched prisoner has only her love to give. It is but a week ago since he was here, in this very place."

Ethel was interrupted by the lady exclaiming, in a voice of thunder:

"Wretch! you love Ordener Guldenlew, betrothed to Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, son of your father's mortal enemy, the Viceroy of Norway."

Ethel fell fainting.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE WILD-CAT IN THE THICKET.

"We may expect a perfect gale to-night in that wretched defile, the Black Pillar, Captain Kennybol," said Guldon Stayper. "There is a strong flapping of wings now. I should like to set fire to the forest. Fancy the whole of an army getting warmth that way."

"God preserve us from such an act. Only think of the game thus sacrificed. Cook it by all means, if you will, but don't roast it alive."

Old Guldon laughed.

"Ah, captain, you will always be the same Kennybol; a wolf to the roebuck, bear to the wolf, and a buffalo to the bear."

"Friend Guldon," said Kennybol, "you have just come from Drontheim. Did you ever see this count, the prisoner? What is the name?—Stumacker—Gleffenhem? I mean the man in whose name we have risen against royal authority; in fact, the one whose arms are embroidered on that large banner you are carrying?"

"You mean the Munckholm prisoner, the count. To do so I must have had the eyes of that devil before us. There is but one of us who has seen the count."

"You mean Hacket. He left us this very night to return to him."

"I don't mean Hacket. I am speaking of the young man in the green cloak and black plume, who joined us so suddenly this night. He knows this famous count as well as I know you, Captain Kennybol."

"I thought so," exclaimed the latter, triumphantly, delighted with his own penetration.

"He not only knows the count," added Guldon, "but he has been to Munckholm, and he went into the prison with as little ceremony as we should venture into the park."

"How do you know this?"

"Look," said he, carefully uncovering a splendid diamond buckle attached to his clumsy belt.

Kennybol stared in amazement.

"Guldon Stayper, your father died at the age of a hundred and two, having no cause to reproach himself. There is no harm in killing by mistake a trifle of royal game. You are now fifty-seven—not even young for an owl. Now I would rather those diamonds were grains of sand, if they have come to you in a dishonorable way."

"Those diamonds, for they are real, are lawfully mine," coolly replied Guldon. "One night, about a week since, when I had just directed some people to Drontheim, where they wished to carry the body of an officer they had found at Urchtal, a young man jumped into my boat, saying, 'To Munckholm!' This was said with such an air of authority that I took up my oars at once. He had left his servant behind to take care of the two horses. On arriving, he spoke to the officer in charge. To me, by way of payment, he threw this diamond buckle. I should know this young man among a thousand—the maker of my fortune. I felt sure he was going to see the famous prisoner. Had it not been a mysterious affair, he would hardly have paid me in such a way. This young man now with Norbith is the same individual, besides the same cloak, the same plume. I believe the count we are trying to release has more faith in him than in Master Hacket, who seems of no use to me but to shout like a wild-cat."

"Comrade, I am of your opinion, and I would rather obey this young man than this envoy, Hacket; and if the

Iceland devil does command us, we owe it far less to this chattering crow of a Hacket than to this stranger."

"True, captain."

"Kennybol!" exclaimed Norbith, hastily interrupting them, "we are betrayed! The whole regiment of musketeers is marching against us; the hussars and three troops are advancing. One who has come from the south says so, and adds that the green jackets are as thick on the way as the hedges. Now, quickly, for Skongen. There, at least, we can defend ourselves."

"But Master Hacket?" said Kennybol.

"He is a traitor or a coward, believe me," replied Norbith. "Where is this Master Hacket now?"

Jonas came forward, and it was easy to see by his face that he also had heard the fatal news.

"Comrade Jonas, it would be prudent for us to halt here."

"And I, Brother Kennybol, believe it would be far wiser to retreat."

"Halt! Retreat!" exclaimed Norbith. "Advance! I say."

"Advance!" repeated Kennybol; "what about the soldiers from Munckholm?"

"What about the royal tax, and my mother, who is dying of starvation?" cried Norbith.

"May Heaven deliver us from this tax!" said Jonas.

"Our swords alone can do that," replied Norbith, fiercely. "I have no fancy to return to our mountains as foxes before wolves. Besides, our names are known, and I prefer the ball from a musket to the rope of a gibbet."

"My brave Norbith, you are right," answered Kennybol; "there is danger on all sides. It is better to march over the precipice than to be driven back."

"Onward! onward!" cried Jonas, grasping the hilt of his sword.

"Our first halt must be at Skongen, which is feebly garrisoned, and must soon surrender. From these defiles we must extricate ourselves, but all is to be done in strict silence. Now to our posts, and to-morrow we shall perhaps be at Drontheim in spite of all the soldiers."

The word of command was given, and all pressed forward silently. The route gradually became narrower, and after two hours' painful marching the advanced guard reached the fir trees at the end of the defile called the Black Pillar.

"May St. Silvestra be praised!" said Guldon Stayper,



coming up to Kennybol; "we have cleared that cut-throat place, and the Black Pillar has not proved fatal."

Kennybol was struck by two round objects which gleamed through the thicket.

"Good heavens!" cried he, "there are two fiery eyes for you. They must belong to the largest wild-cat about here."

"You may be right," replied old Stayper; "but if the Demon of Iceland were not at the head of us, I should say they were his eyes."

"Silence!" said Kennybol, raising his musket and firing.

No wild-cat's cry answered. It was more like a tiger's roar, followed by a burst of laughter more fearful still.

Scarcely had the flash lit up the darkness, than thousands of voices shouted on all sides, "Long live the king!" followed by a volley of musketry, mowing down the rebels from every point. The terrible firing from the heavy guns lighted up the scene—a battalion at every rock, a soldier behind every tree.

Colonel Voethaun had arrived at Skongen with his regiment while the miners were still on the march. He was on the point of entering the house placed at his disposal when a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder. He hastily turned round, and found himself facing a little man, wearing an immense straw hat, drawn over his eyes. He was so carefully enveloped in a long cloak that nothing could be seen of him except a thick red beard, and hands covered in huge gloves.

"What the duse do you want?" exclaimed the colonel.

"Follow me, colonel; I have news of the utmost importance."

In the colonel's position any information was not to be despised.

"Go forward," said he, following the little man until they reached the outskirts.

"Colonel, are you anxious to crush the whole of the insurgents at a single blow?"

The colonel replied, laughingly:

"Well! it would not be a bad way of commencing the campaign."

"Place all your men in ambush at the end of the defile called Black Pillar. The whole of the insurgents will be encamped there to-night. Charge them at the first shot, and victory will be easy."

"I thank you for your good advice; but how came you by this information?"

"If you knew me you would wonder if I remained in ignorance; but I am not here to tell you who I am."

"Whoever you may be, this very service will be your safeguard. Perhaps you are one of the rebels?"

"I refused to join them."

"Why conceal your name, as you are the king's faithful subject?"

"I care little for that."

"Can you tell me if the brigands are commanded by Han of Iceland?"

"Han of Iceland?" repeated the little man, in a curious tone.

The baron vainly continued his questions.

"Colonel," at length said the stranger, "I have told you all I intend to say. Now, place your regiment in ambush about the Black Pillar, and the whole band of insurgents is yours."

"You insist upon concealing your name, and thus depriving yourself of the king's gratitude; but Baron Voethaun must show you his sense of the favor thus rendered him," said the colonel, throwing his purse at the little man's feet.

"Keep you gold, colonel; I don't want it. Had you demanded a heavy fee for killing men, well, I would have given you gold for their blood," said he, showing a heavy purse attached to his belt.

Before the colonel could recover from his astonishment at these strange words, the mysterious visitor had disappeared.

The baron slowly returned, wondering what faith could be placed on the advice from such a man.

On reaching his quarters a letter from the grand chancellor was brought in, containing the same advice which had been proffered by the strange person in the large straw hat and huge gloves.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### TREACHERY AND VENGEANCE.

It is impossible to describe the terrible confusion of the rebels at this sudden surprise, when every moment increased their danger. Kennybol's fatal shot was the only one fired, while on all sides a volley poured in. The soldiers to them seemed but devils preparing the furnace.

Retreat was impossible, owing to the narrow and winding path being bounded by rocks on the one side, and by a fearful torrent on the other. The ranks were broken, and the long column of insurgents looked like a serpent, which, when struck on the spine, writhes its severed coils in trying to unite them. After the first panic, this crowd of men raised such a cry that for a moment it drowned the shouts of their triumphant enemies. Even they were aghast at the sight of these brigands, for the most part unarmed, scaling the rocks, clinging with their teeth and hands to the brambles overhanging the precipices, while brandishing their hammers and their pitchforks. Some even reached the summit of the rocks occupied by their assailants, by making a bridge of the dead, or by raising themselves on their comrades' shoulders. Scarcely had their blackened faces, convulsed with rage, appeared, or had they raised a hatchet to the cry of "Liberty," than they were hurled into the abyss, often dragging in their fall their companions to destruction, who were clinging to a bush or the point of a rock.

Vainly they tried to defend themselves, or to seek safety in flight. Most of these unfortunate men perished, and the foaming torrent rushed over this scene of carnage, carrying away its prey—the dead.

The mountaineers, under the brave but imprudent Kenybol, had suffered the most. They formed the advance guard, and the moment after their chief had fired the fatal shot they were met with a volley on all sides. Kennybol, in this horrible crisis, turned toward the mysterious giant, hoping to receive supernatural help; but the demon neither spread his wings, nor sent forth flames and thunderbolts on the musketeers, neither did he suddenly reach the height of a mountain and cast it on his assailants, nor strike the earth for it to open beneath the battalion in ambush. This formidable Han of Iceland gave way at first shock, and asked for a carbine, saying, in quite an ordinary tone, that his hatchet was as useless at such a time as an old woman's distaff. Kennybol, still credulous, though somewhat astonished, gave him the musket, but with such trepidation that it almost overpowered his sense of fear of the shots all around.

He still expected the musket handled by Han of Iceland would become as large as a cannon, or turn into a winged dragon, shooting forth fire from its nose, eyes, and mouth. Imagine the sportsman's surprise when he saw the demon

charge and fire his gun several times with less skill than he could have done himself.

It was evidently useless to look for miracles; he must have recourse to ordinary means of help. His poor old comrade, Stayper lay dead at his feet covered with wounds. The terrified mountaineers pressed one against another, little thinking by thus forming a mass they were a surer target for their enemies. Kennybol at once ordered them to disperse, to throw themselves into the nearest thicket, to conceal themselves in the brushwood, and return their enemies' fire. The mountaineers were mostly fairly armed, for they were all hunters, and they silently followed their chief's orders. In moments of danger men often lose their heads, and they willingly obey one who retains his presence of mind. Yet some remained inactive, either leaning on their muskets, or lying by the side of the wounded, to meet death without firing a shot in self-defense. It may seem strange that men accustomed to hunt wild beasts should so soon lose courage, but one thing is certain, courage in some minds springs from habit, and the one who boldly faces shot will often tremble at darkness or the verge of a precipice, while others, who will attack a wild beast, or take an abyss at a bound, will fly before a salvo of artillery.

Kennybol was surrounded by his dying comrades, although himself but slightly wounded in the left arm, while the diabolical giant simply acted as a musketeer.

All at once there was evidently great confusion on the heights among the victorious troops, followed by cries of distress and agony, mingled with curses, certainly not caused by the mountaineers, who could do but little damage. Firing ceased, the smoke cleared sufficiently to show that immense blocks were rapidly falling in the midst of the soldiers, who fled in all directions down the rocks.

At such unlooked-for help, Kennybol expected to find that the giant, Han of Iceland, had taken flight over the rocks, and sent these huge masses down on his enemies; but the giant was still there. It could not be the rebels, for no arms were visible, nor could any shouts of victory be heard. Finding their enemies had nearly ceased to fire, and numbers lay crushed beneath the masses of rock, which still continued to fall, Kennybol and his followers rallied, and determined to force their way through this disastrous defile. They formed in column, crying, "Liberty! liberty! No more taxes!" when the soldiers, largely

reinforced, advanced within gun-shot, the commander displaying a flag of truce. Kannybol, at the sound of the bugle and drum, had ordered his men to charge their carbines and place themselves in a double line, two abreast, in order to be less open to the enemy's fire. He placed himself at the head, with the giant, to whose presence he had become accustomed, since he had ventured to notice that his eyes did not shoot forth flames like a furnace, and that his pretended claws were much like human hands. The officer, however, with the flag of truce had advanced half-way, and the trumpeter who accompanied him had thrice sounded the bugle. The mountaineers could distinctly hear the officer's words:

"In the name of the king! The king's pardon is granted to all rebels who will throw down their arms and deliver their chiefs up to royal justice."

The commander had scarcely finished speaking, when a shot was fired from a neighboring thicket, which struck him.

He raised his flag on high and fell, crying, "Treachery!" No one could tell who fired the fatal shot.

"Treachery! cowardice! cowardice!" cried the musketeers, trembling with rage, at the same time discharging a murderous volley at the mountaineers.

"Treachery!" shouted the mountaineers. Furious at seeing their comrades fall, they quickly returned the fire.

"At them, comrades! death to these cowards. Death!" cried the musketeer officers.

"Death—death!" replied the mountaineers.

Both parties advanced within a short distance of the fallen officer. Then came a most fatal hand-to-hand fight—pick-ax against bayonet, sword against hatchet, and in many instances the combatants were in such close quarters that it was impossible to avail themselves of any thing but their daggers or their teeth. Both mountaineers and musketeers were animated by the same furious indignation, crying:

"Treachery! Vengeance."

The fight had reached that point when the death of an enemy, although unknown, is preferable to life itself; when man tramples over the wounded and the dead, rousing even the dying to seize with his teeth the foot that crushes him.

Suddenly a little man, covered with wild animals' skins whom the combatants at first mistook for a wild beast, threw himself in the midst of the carnage, shouting with



joy and laughter. No one knew whence he came. His stone hatchet fell with equal force on a rebel or a soldier. If he made a choice, it was in more freely crushing a Munckholm musketeer. All fled before him. He brandished his terrible hatchet on all sides, scattering fragments of flesh, severed limbs, and broken bones. He, too, cried "Vengeance!" and added strange words, among which the name of Gill often occurred. To this formidable being the slaughter appeared a holiday.

A mountaineer fell at the feet of the giant on whom Kennybol had placed such reliance, crying:

"Han of Iceland, save me!"

"Han of Iceland!" repeated the little man, advancing toward the giant. "Are you Han of Iceland?"

The giant, by way of answer, raised his iron hatchet. The little man stepped back, and the weapon in its descent cleft the skull of the unfortunate man who had implored the giant's help.

"Ho! ho!" said the stranger, laughing; "by Ingulphus, I thought Han of Iceland was more expert."

"It is thus Han of Iceland treats those who implore his assistance," said the giant.

"You are right."

These two formidable champions attacked each other with fury. Both stone and iron hatchets broke in a thousand pieces. The little man seized a wooden club from the ground, and taking it with both hands, he aimed a heavy blow at his colossal adversary, just as the latter was stooping to grasp him. With one cry the giant fell, struck between the eyes.

"You took a name much too heavy for you to bear," said the stranger, triumphantly. Kicking the body aside, and brandishing his victorious club, he went in search of other victims.

The giant was only stunned. Just as he recovered consciousness a musketeer noticed his first movement, and threw himself upon him, shouting, "Han of Iceland is taken prisoner! Victory!"

"Han of Iceland is taken!" was echoed on all sides in accents of triumph and distress. The little man had disappeared. The mountaineers were utterly outnumbered. Owing to the enemy's continual reinforcements their chiefs had surrendered, to stay the carnage. Brave Kennybol was taken prisoner. Han of Iceland's capture had completely disheartened the rebels, and they all lowered their arms.

At dawn in the defiles of the Black Pillar a deathly silence reigned around, faintly broken at times by feeble moans. The sky was darkened by the mass of crows which flew over the ravine. Some poor goatherders fled in terror from the scene. They affirmed they had seen in the defiles of the Black Pillar a beast with a human face, seated on a heap of slain, drinking blood.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE BLACK STICK IN WAITING.

"My daughter, open the window. I like the daylight."

"Father, it will soon be night time."

"I can still see the last rays of the setting sun on the hills. I long to breathe the fresh air through the iron bars of my cell. The sky is so clear."

"Father, look at the horizon; a storm is rising."

"A storm, Ethel! Where do you see it?"

"The clearness of the sky makes me dread a tempest."

"If I had had such thoughts in my youth we should not have been here," said the old man, much surprised. "What you say is right, but it is beyond your years, and I cannot understand how it is that instinct should prompt you to draw the same conclusions I have gained from experience."

Ethel, at this grave and simple reply, lowered her eyes and sighed deeply.

"My daughter, for some days you have been so pale, as though all life had gone out of you. In the morning your eyes are red with weeping, and your silence has left me to brood over the past. You are sadder than I, yet you are not weighed down by the thoughts of a wasted life. Your youth has been passed in sadness, but your heart has not felt the burden of sorrow. Morning clouds soon disperse themselves, and youth will ever build castles in the air, regardless of the present. Child, what ails you? This captivity is monotonous, but you are free from other evils. What have you done? Surely you are not fretting for me! You must be accustomed to my irremediable misfortune. With me all hope has fled; but there is no reason for you to despair," said the prisoner, tenderly.

Ethel answered with her sobs, as she fell weeping at her father's feet. What had she done to that strange woman that she should blast her life by telling her Ordener's full name? She could not rest or sleep. He who was in all

her thoughts, in all her prayers, he whose wife she hoped to be, was no longer hers. The very evening Ordener pressed her in his arms seemed now but a dream, which had repeated itself each night since he left. It was then a guilty feeling to think of the absent one. Her Ordener was affianced to another. What words can depict all she endured, tortured with jealousy, as she lay tossing to and fro during the long hours of the night, picturing her Ordener, perhaps in the arms of another, wealthy, noble, and more beautiful than herself. "How could I fancy," murmured she, "that he would risk death for my sake? Ordener, a great lord, the viceroy's son; I nothing but a poor prisoner, the despised daughter of an outlaw. He has gone, he is free, and has, no doubt, left me, to wed his beautiful betrothed, the daughter of a chancellor, a minister, a proud count! So he deceived me! my Ordener! Oh, God! who could believe that that voice could deceive?" The wretched Ethel wept unceasingly. Ordener was ever before her eyes; he was her god, although going to the altar with that smile for another which had been her great happiness.

The poor girl had made every effort to conceal her grief from her father. Tears that are shed are far less bitter than those which are smothered. It was some days before the old man perceived the change in his daughter, and his gentle questioning had caused her heart to overflow with grief.

"Ethel," said he, "you have not a care in this world. Why are you crying?"

"Father, forgive me," said the noble girl, making a great effort to restrain her tears; "it was one of my weak moments." Forcing a smile, she took up the Edda and commenced reading.

"Cease, my child," said the old man.

She closed the book.

"Ethel," pursued Schumacker, "do you sometimes think of Ordener, the one who has gone——"

"Father," quickly interrupted the young girl, "why speak of him? I think with you—he has gone never to return."

"Not return, my child? I could never have said that. On the contrary, I have a presentiment he will."

"You were not of that opinion when you spoke so doubtfully of this young man."

"Did I speak doubtfully?"

"Yes, father; and I am quite of your mind. I believe he has deceived us."

"Deceived us, my child? If I so judged him, I have condemned him without cause. This Ordener gave me every proof of devotion."

"How do you know, my dear father, if his kind words but served to hide his treacherous thoughts?"

"Men do not generally court the society of those in grief and misfortune. If Ordener were not attached to me, he would not have sought me in prison without an object."

"Are you quite sure," replied Ethel, "in coming here he had none?"

"What could it have been?"

Ethel was silent. She could not continue to accuse the well-beloved Ordener, whom she had so warmly defended.

"I am no longer Count Griffenfeld, the Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway, the all-powerful minister, dispenser of royal favors. I am a wretched State prisoner, an outlaw, a proscribed politician. It requires some courage to mention my detested name to men I have loaded with honors and riches; it requires devotion to cross the threshold of my cell by aught but the jailer or the executioner. It is real heroism for one to come as my friend. No; I will not be ungrateful like the rest of the human race. This young man deserves my gratitude, if only for showing me a sympathizing face, and letting me hear the voice of consolation."

Ethel listened sorrowfully to words which a few days previously would have filled her with happiness, when Ordener was still her Ordener.

"Listen," continued the old man in a solemn tone. "My strength is failing me, and I can feel that my end is not far off."

"Oh, father!" cried Ethel, despairingly, "do not say such words. Pray, spare your poor daughter. Would you leave her thus? Alas! what will become of me when I am alone without your protection?"

"An outlaw's protection!" replied her father, shaking his head. "That is what I have been thinking about. Your future happiness concerns me far more than my past misfortunes. Listen then, and do not interrupt me. Ordener does not deserve to be judged so severely. Until now I had no idea you held him in such aversion. He looks both frank and noble. That proves nothing. But he is not without some good points. Yet he would not be a man if he were not steeped in every vice and every

crime. There is never smoke without fire!" Fixing his eyes on his daughter, the old man continued: "Feeling the near approach of death, I have thought much about him and you, Ethel. Should he return, as I fully hope may be the case, I will make him your protector and your husband."

Ethel trembled and turned pale. It was at the very time her dream of happiness had vanished forever that her father tried to compass its fulfillment. The bitter thought recurred to her, "It might have been." The girl could not speak, lest the burning tears should fall. At length she replied:

"Is it possible you had selected him for me as a husband, my lord and father, without knowing who he was, to whom he belonged, and not even his name?"

"I did not say, 'I had selected him,' but I repeat, I do select him for you. What do I care about his birth? I do not want to know anything of his family, since I am acquainted with himself. Think well of this; it is the only anchor on which you may hope to trust. Fortunately he has not the same dislike toward you that you evince toward him."

The poor girl raised her eyes to Heaven.

"You hear me, Ethel? He is doubtless of obscure parentage, for those born in palaces do not frequent prisons. Do not show any false pride. Remember, Ethel Schumacker is no longer Princess of Wollin and Countess of Tongsberg. You have sunk lower than the position from which your father raised himself. Be thankful if this man accepts your hand, no matter what his family may be. If of humble birth, so much the better; you will then at least be protected from the troubles which have beset your father's life. By changing your name you will be free from envy and hatred; your very existence will soon be ignored, and your life will end far better than it has commenced."

Ethel fell at the prisoner's feet.

"Oh, father! in the name of Heaven spare me, and do not picture happiness which can never be mine."

"Ethel," said the old man, severely, "do not trifle with fate. I refused the hand of a royal princess—do you hear me?—a princess of Holstein-Augustenburg! My pride has been cruelly punished. You disdain a loyal-hearted man because he is of obscure origin. Tremble lest your chastisement should not be as heavy as mine."



"Would that he were loyal and of humble birth," murmured Ethel.

"My daughter," said the old man, greatly agitated, "do not let my last moments be troubled with anxiety about your future; promise to accept this stranger for your husband."

"I will obey you, father, but do not hope for his return."

"I have weighed every chance, and by the way Ordener pronounced your name I believe——"

"That he loves me?" interrupted Ethel, bitterly. "Oh, no! do not credit it."

"To use your own expression, I do not know if he loves you, but I am sure he will return."

"Banish the idea, father. Besides, if you really knew him, you would not, perhaps, accept him for a son-in-law."

"Ethel, he shall be so, whatever his name and rank may be."

"Well, then, this young man, in whom you have found such consolation, who is to be your daughter's protector—if he were Count Guldenlew, the son of your mortal enemy, the Viceroy of Norway!"

"What are you saying? Great heavens! Ordener! this Ordener!—it is impossible!"

The fearful expression of hatred which came into the old man's eyes horrified Ethel, and she repented her imprudent words.

The blow had struck home. Schumacker seemed transfixed with emotion. At length he spoke like a man in a dream——

"Ordener! Yes, I see it all. Ordener Guldenlew! Go on, Schumacker, you old idiot! throw open your arms to this loyal young man, that he may stab you to the heart! So," continued he, in a voice of thunder, "they have sent one of their infamous race to insult me in my captivity and my downfall! I have seen a D'Ahlefeld, and nearly smiled on a Guldenlew. The monsters! Who would have thought this Ordener had such a soul and such a name? Woe to me! woe to me!" He fell back in his chair quite overcome. Poor terrified Ethel was sobbing at his feet.

"Don't cry, my child; come to my heart," said he, pressing his arms gently around her.

Ethel could hardly understand her father's caress, in the midst of so much rage. He enlightened her by his next remark.

"You are more clear-sighted than your old father. You were not deceived by the soft-eyed but venomous serpent.

Come, let me thank you for the hatred you have shown this execrable Ordener."

Ethel shuddered at praise so little deserved.

"My lord and father, pray calm yourself."

"Promise me," said Schumacker, vehemently, "that you will ever preserve this same feeling toward that Ordener Guldenlew.

"Always," said Ethel, who found no difficulty in thus replying.

"Well said, my child. I cannot bequeath you the riches and honors of which they have deprived me, but I can transmit my hatred for them to you. Listen! They deprived me of my rank and glory, they dragged me to the scaffold in irons, loading me with every infamy, and torturing me with every pain. The wretches owed their power to me, and turned it against me. May Heaven hear me! Curse them, and all their offspring!"

He stooped to embrace the poor girl, who was terrified at his imprecations.

"Tell me, my Ethel, my only hope and pride, was your instinct keener than mine? How did you discover that this traitor bore the hated name, which is more bitter than gall to my heart? How did you learn this secret?"

She was about to answer, when the door was thrown open, and a man clothed in black entered, carrying a black stick, and wearing a burnished steel chain around his neck. He was surrounded by halberdiers, also in black.

"What do you want with me?" said the captive, sharply.

The man, without replying, unrolled a long parchment, from which hung a green seal attached by silk. He read in a loud voice:

"In the name of his majesty, our merciful lord and sovereign, Christian, king.

"It is written that Schumacker, a State prisoner in this royal fortress of Munckholm, and his daughter are to follow the bearer of this order."

Schumacker repeated his question:

"What do you want with me?"

The man in black impassibly prepared himself to read the order over again.

"That is sufficient," said the old man. Rising, he signed to the astonished and terrified Ethel to follow under this dismal escort.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY.

The shades of night had fallen, the wind howled around the accursed tower, and the very doors of the ruin of Vyglå trembled on their hinges.

The executioner was seated in the midst of his family, around a fire on the first floor of the tower. The flames shed a glare on their somber faces and their scarlet clothes. There was a savage ferocity about the children's faces, resembling their father's laugh, combined with their mother's haggard expression. Their eyes and those of Bechlie were turned toward Orugix, whose fatigued and dusty appearance denoted that he had just arrived from a great distance.

"Wife and children, listen. I have not been absent two days for nothing. If before another month has passed I am not the royal executioner, may I never tie a slip-knot or wield an ax. Rejoice, my little cubs; your father will, perhaps, leave you as a heritage the scaffold of Copenhagen itself."

"Nychol," said Bechlie, "what has happened?"

"And you, my old Bohemian," replied Nychol, with his deep laugh, "rejoice also. You can soon buy some blue beads to ornament your throat, somewhat like a strangled swan's. Our engagement will soon cease; but when you see me the executioner in chief of both kingdoms, you will not refuse it over another flagon of ale."

"What has happened, father?" said the children. The elder was playing with a wooden horse covered with blood, the younger amusing himself with plucking a live bird that he had taken from its mother's nest.

"Kill that bird, Haspar; it squeaks like an old saw. Besides, you must not be cruel. Kill it at once. Very little has occurred, Dame Bechlie, except that in eight days or so, ex-Chancellor Schumacker, now a prisoner at Munckholm, who was within my reach at Copenhagen, and the famous brigand of Iceland, Han of Klipstadur, will pass through my hands, perhaps on the same day."

"Schumacker! Han of Iceland! What is this, Nychol?" said the woman, with evident surprise and curiosity.

"Yesterday morning, on my way to Skongen, I met a whole regiment of Munckholm musketeers, who were returning victoriously from Drontheim. I questioned one of the soldiers, who deigned to answer me, because he doubtless did not know the meaning of my red jacket and red cart. He informed me that the insurgents, hemmed in near Black Pillar, had been cut to pieces by the musketeers. You must know, Bohemian, that these rebels had arisen for the sake of Schumacker, and were commanded by Han of Iceland. This constitutes a criminal charge against Han of Iceland, and high treason against Schumacker. In both cases these honorable gentlemen will either be led to the block or the gibbet. For each of these great executions I cannot receive less than fifteen golden ducats. Besides having the greatest honor in the two kingdoms conferred on me, I shall have other privileges."

"Is it possible," said Bechlie, "that Han of Iceland has been captured?"

"Don't interrupt your lord and master, daughter of perdition. Yes; this famous Han of Iceland has been taken prisoner, together with his lieutenants, some other brigand chiefs. They will bring me in twelve crowns a head, besides the sale of their bodies."

"What! did you see Han, father?"

"Be quiet, children. You each cry like a rascal who declares he is innocent. Yes, I saw him. He is a giant, and he was walking with his arms crossed behind him, bound in chains. His forehead was bandaged, being wounded in the head; but I will soon cure him of that wound."

Making a horrible sign, the executioner continued:

"He was followed by four other wounded prisoners. They are all to be tried at Drontheim; likewise the ex-Grand Chancellor Schumacker. There will be a special court, over which the present grand chancellor will preside."

"Father, what were the other prisoners like?"

"The first two were old men—one a miner, the other a mountaineer. Both seemed disconsolate. The third was a young miner, who walked firmly along, whistling. The other was one of those travelers who sought shelter here on the night of the storm, about ten days ago. Do you remember, my angelic Bechlie?"

"As Satan remembers the day of his fall," said the woman.

"Did you remark a young man who was with that be-

wigged old idiot of a doctor? The young traveler who wore a large green cloak and a hat with a black plume?"

"I can see him now before me, when he said: 'Woman, we have gold!'"

"Well, well, old woman, may I never strangle more grouse if the fourth prisoner were not the same young man. I did not see his face, certainly, as it was concealed by his plume, his hair, and his cloak; besides which, he walked with his head bent down. But the clothes, the boots, the same manner—there, I will swallow the stone gibbet of Skongen at a mouthful if that is not the same man. What do you think of that, Bechlie? Would it not be droll, if after helping this stranger to sustain life I should assist him in shortening it, and that I should prove my dexterity to him after he had enjoyed my hospitality?"

The executioner, laughing loudly, added: "Come, let us drink and be merry. Here, Bechlie, give me some of that beer, which rasps the throat as though it were made of files. Let us drink to my future advancement. Honors and health to Lord Nychol Orugix, royal executioner in perspective. I will own, old sinner, that I had much trouble in getting to Nœs, in order that I might quietly hang some ignoble stealer of cabbages and endive; but thirty-two pieces were not to be despised, and, after all, I shall not lower myself by executing merely thieves and scamps of that kind when once I have beheaded the noble count, ex-grand chancellor, and the famous demon of Iceland. So I resigned myself to my fate, and dispatched the poor wretch at Nœs, while awaiting my diploma as master royal of lofty works. Here," added he, drawing his leather purse from his knapsack, "are the thirty-two pieces."

Just then a horn gave three blasts outside the tower.

"Wife!" cried Orugix, rising, "those are the high syndic's archers;" and he hastened to go down. He immediately returned with a large document, of which he had broken the seal.

"There," said he to the woman, "just read what the high syndic says—you who could decipher Satan's conjuring box. Perhaps it is my promotion. As the court will be presided over by a grand chancellor, and the accused was a grand chancellor, none but a royal executioner should carry out the sentence."

After looking well over the parchment, the woman read the following words aloud, while the children stared at her in stupid wonderment:

"In the name of the High Syndic of the Drontheimhus,



Nychol Orugix, executioner of the province, is ordered to leave at once for Drontheim, taking with him his ax of honor, his block, with its black hangings."

"Is that all?" said the executioner, discontentedly.

"Yes, that is all," replied Bechlie.

"Executioner of the province!" muttered Orugix, between his teeth, casting angry looks at the court parchment.

"Well," added he, "I must go. Yet I am ordered to take the ax of honor, and the black hangings. Mind, Bechlie, you see that my ax is not rusted, and that the drapery is not marked. Besides, I must not be discouraged. Perhaps I shall owe my advancement to this fine execution. Well, so much the worse for those condemned; they will not have the satisfaction of being put to death by a royal executioner."

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THEY JUDGED HIM AS THEMSELVES.

Count d'Ahlefeld, in his satin gown trimmed with ermine, with his judge's wig covering both head and shoulders, wearing several stars and decorations, among which was the collar of royal orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog, in fact, in full robes as Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway, was walking about Countess d'Ahlefeld's room, with a preoccupied air.

"It is nine o'clock. The court will soon be sitting. I must not keep them waiting, for the sentence must be passed this night, so that the execution may take place to-morrow morning, at the latest. The high syndic assured me that the headsman would be here before dawn. Elphege, did you order the barge to be in readiness to convey me to Munckholm?"

"My lord," replied the countess, rising, "it has been here at least half an hour. Everything is ready."

"You say, Elphege, there is a love affair going on between Ordener Guldenlew and Schumacker's daughter?"

"They are deeply in love, I can assure you," answered the countess, with rage and contempt.

"Who could have imagined it? Yet I had my doubts."

"And I also. This is some of Master Levin's tricks!"

"That old rascal of a Mecklenburger," muttered the chancellor. "Yes, I will certainly recommend him to Arens-

dorf. If I could but compass his disgrace! Listen, Elphege, an idea has struck me."

"What is it?"

"There are six prisoners at Munckholm waiting for judgment. Schumacker, I trust, by this time to-morrow will cease troubling us. That huge mountaineer, our false Han of Iceland, has sworn to keep up the deception to the last, fully convinced that Musdœmon, from whom he has received heavy sums of money, will help him to escape. That Musdœmon's ideas are really diabolical. Three other prisoners are rebel chiefs. The last of the number joined the meeting at Apsyl-Corh, no one knows how. Owing to Musdœmon's precautions, he also has fallen into our hands. Musdœmon thinks he is Levin's spy. He asked for the general immediately on his arrival, and appeared much dismayed on hearing of the Mecklenburger's absence. This young man refused to answer any of Musdœmon's questions."

"My lord, why did you not question him yourself?" inquired the countess.

"Really, Elphege, how could I do so, with all the business I have on hand? I left it to Musdœmon, who is equally interested with myself. Besides, this man is of no importance—only some poor vagabond who will serve our purpose by representing him as Levin de Knud's spy. He was taken when in the midst of the rebels. That alone will prove there is a connivance between the Mecklenburger and Schumacker—a fact which will compass this cursed Levin's disgrace, even should an indictment against him be impossible."

"You are right, my lord," said the countess, after a moment's reflection. "But Baron Thorwick's fatal passion for Ethel Schumacker?"

"Listen, Elphege. Nether you nor I are novices in this world's ways," replied the chancellor, shrugging his shoulders; "yet we do not understand mankind. When Schumacker has, for the second time been convicted of high treason, when this infamy has ended in his death on the scaffold, when his daughter is thus branded with her father's disgrace, and sunk to the lowest grades of society, do you believe Ordener Guldenlew will remember this childish fancy that you term passion, from hearing a young girl's foolish words, that he will hesitate for one moment between the dishonored daughter of a wretched criminal and the noble daughter of a mighty chancellor? We must

judge men by ourselves, my dear. Have you ever seen one who would not act thus?"

"I trust you are right. I made a request to the syndic—do not neglect to have it ratified—that Schumacker's daughter should be present at her father's trial, and be placed near me. I am anxious to study this creature."

"All is precious that can throw any light on this affair," said the chancellor, sententiously. "Can any one say where Ordener is now?"

"Not a person knows. He is a worthy pupil of old Levin—just such another knight-errant. I think he is at Ward-Hus."

"Well, well. He will settle down with our Ulrica. I forgot the court was waiting for me."

"Just one word, my lord. You were so preoccupied yesterday that I could get no reply. Where is my Frederic?"

"Frederic?" said the count, covering his face with his hand.

"Yes; answer me—my Frederic. His regiment has returned to Drontheim without him. Swear to me that Frederic was not in that horrible file of Black Pillar. Why at the mention of Frederic's name has your face so changed? I am terribly anxious about him."

"Elphege, calm yourself," said the chancellor, recovering himself. "I vow he was not at the Black Pillar. Besides, the lists of killed and wounded have been published."

"Yes; I now feel reassured," replied the countess. "Only two officers were killed—Captain Lory and young Baron Radmer, who was my Frederic's companion in all his follies at the Copenhagen balls. Oh, I read the list most carefully. Tell me, my lord, is my son then still at Wahlstrom?"

"Yes, he is there."

"Well, then, dear friend," said the mother, tenderly, "I have one favor to ask—will you see that my Frederic soon returns from that awful country?"

"Madam!" said the chancellor, with difficulty disengaging himself from her arms, "the court is waiting for me. Adieu. What you require does not depend on me," added he, leaving her abruptly.

The countess remained gloomy and thoughtful.

"It does not depend on him!" she exclaimed, softly.

"One word from him would give me back my son. I have always thought so—that man is truly wicked."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE VICTIM OF HIS OWN DEVICES.

On leaving the dungeon of the Lion of Sleswig, the guards separated the trembling Ethel from her father, and led her through dark passages altogether unknown to her, until they came to a gloomy cell, which she entered, and the door was closed upon her. On the opposite side was an open grating, through which the light from the torches gleamed on a woman veiled and dressed in black, who was seated on a bench in front of the opening, and making signs to Ethel to take a seat beside her. Ethel, thunder-struck, obeyed in silence. The scene before her was most solemn and imposing.

The hall was draped in black, and faintly lighted by means of brass lamps suspended from the ceiling. At the extreme end was a table, shaped like a horse-shoe, around which seven judges in black gowns were seated. The one in the center occupied a raised seat, and was decorated with diamond collars and glittering gold stars. The judge at the right of the center wore a white scarf and ermine cloak—his badge of office as high syndic (chief magistrate) of the province. On a platform, over which a dais was spread, to the right of the bench, sat an old man in episcopal vestments. To the left was a short man, with an enormous wig, who was enveloped in the folds of a long black gown and seated before a table covered with papers.

Facing the judges was a wooden bench, surrounded by halberdiers bearing torches, which reflected on a crowd of spectators, pressing against the grating which separated them from the court.

All this to Ethel seemed but a dream; but she was by no means indifferent to the result. Some inward voice warned her that a crisis in her life was at hand. She was a prey to different feelings—either to know at once the reason of her interest in this scene, or not to know it at all. Since Ordener was lost to her forever, what had life to offer? She sought only to know the end of fate. Feeling that the decisive moment had now arrived, she dwelt on the spectacle before her less with repugnance than with a sort of feverish joy, sad in its very intensity.

The president arose and proclaimed, in the name of the king: "The court of justice is open."

The little man in black, to the left of the bench, read in a low and rapid voice a long discourse, wherein Ethel heard her father's name mingled with the words conspiracy, revolt of the miners, high treason. Ethel remembered the strange woman's fatal words in the tower garden, telling her of the accusation which threatened her father. Ethel shuddered on hearing the man in black wind up his discourse with the word death, forcibly pronounced. The poor girl was terrified, and, turning toward the woman, whom she instinctively feared, she timidly inquired:

"Where are we? what is the meaning of all this?"

Her mysterious companion, by a gesture, enjoined her to silence and attention.

The venerable man in episcopal vestments had risen, and Ethel recoiled at these words, so distinctly pronounced:

"In the name of almighty and merciful God, I, Pamphile Eleuthere, bishop of the loyal town of Drontheim, in the royal province of the Drontheimhus, bow before this honored court of justice, which is now sitting in the name of the king, our sovereign next to the Lord.

"And I say, that the prisoners now before this court are men and Christians. Seeing they have no counsel, it is my intention, honored judges, to lend them all the assistance in my power in the cruel position in which it is God's will to place them, praying the Almighty to give strength to our weakness and light to our blindness.

"Thus it is that I, bishop of this royal diocese, bow to this honored and judicial court."

Having thus spoken, the bishop left his episcopal throne, and seated himself on the prisoners' wooden bench, amid the applause of the crowded court!"

The president arose, and said in a harsh tone: "Halberdiers, let there be silence in the court!"

"My lord bishop, in the name of the prisoners, the court begs to thank your reverence. People of the Drontheimhus, listen. The judgment will be given without appeal in this royal high court of justice. Archers, bring in the prisoners."

There was dead silence throughout. All present were trembling with expectation, like the heavy waves of a stormy sea when thunder is at hand.

Soon Ethel could hear a dull sound of some extraordinary movement taking place in the passages beneath her. The audience trembled with impatience and curiosity. The



steps came nearer; halberds and muskets glittered; and then six men, in chains, bareheaded, and surrounded by guards, were brought into the middle of the court. Ethel saw but one, an old gray-bearded man in a black simarre—her father.

She fell forward against the stone partition; everything swam before her eyes; she could hear her very heart beating.

"Oh, God! help me!" she feebly murmured.

The veiled woman made her inhale some salts, to arouse her from her lethargy.

"Noble lady," were Ethel's first words, "pray speak to me, that I may know I am not the sport of evil spirits."

The stranger was deaf to her entreaties, and turned silently toward the court. Poor Ethel, now feeling slightly better, could but imitate her reserve.

The president, rising, said in slow and solemn tones:

"Prisoners, you are brought before us to judge whether you are guilty of high treason, conspiracy, and in bearing arms against our noble sovereign."

The light fell at this moment on one of the prisoners, who, with head bent down, endeavored to conceal his face beneath his long, curling hair. Ethel felt a cold shudder run through her frame; she fancied she recognized— But no, it could only be some illusion. The hall was so faintly lighted that men themselves looked only like shadows; the large ebony crucifix over the president's chair was scarcely discernible. Yet Ethel could see from the distance that this young man's cloak was green, his hair brown, and the faint glimpse of his features made her fancy— But she would not dwell on a thought so truly horrible.

The prisoners were all seated on a bench. Schumacker was at one end, the bishop at the other. The young man with the brown hair came next; the middle space was filled by his four companions in misfortune, among whom was a kind of giant, who, like his three neighbors, was roughly clad.

Ethel saw the president turn toward her father, saying harshly

"Old man, what is your name, and who are you?"

Looking at the president, he firmly replied:

"Formerly I was called Count of Griffenfeld and of Tongsberg; Prince of Wollin; Prince of the Holy Empire; Knight of the Royal Order of the Elephant; Knight of the

Royal Order of Dannebrog; Knight of the Golden Fleece of Germany; Knight of the Garter of England; Prime Minister; Inspector-in-chief of the Universities; Grand Chancellor of Denmark; and——”

The president here interrupted him.

“Prisoner, you were not asked what your name was, nor what you were, but you are requested to say what you are now called, and what you are.”

“Well, then,” quickly replied the old man, “I am called John Schumacker, aged sixty-nine, and I am nothing more than your old benefactor, Chancellor d’Ahlefeld.”

The president was thunderstruck.

“I recognized you, my lord count,” added the ex-grand chancellor; “and as you did not appear to be equally mindful of me, I took the liberty of recalling to your grace that we are old acquaintances.”

“Schumacker,” exclaimed the president, angrily, “you are trespassing on the court’s time.”

The old captive continued:

“We have changed places, noble chancellor. Formerly it was I who simply called you D’Ahlefeld, and you addressed me as my lord count.”

“Prisoner, you are only damaging your cause by alluding to the infamy for which you have already been convicted.”

“If the infamy reflected on any one, Count d’Ahlefeld, it was certainly not on myself.”

The aged captive had risen while pronouncing these forcible words.

“Sit down,” said the president, extending his hand. “Do not insult the court, the judges who have condemned you, and the king who has appointed these judges. Remember, the king spared your life. Confine yourself to your own defense.”

Schumacker simply shrugged his shoulders.

“Have you any confession to make concerning the crime of which you are accused?”

Schumacker remained silent.

The president repeated the question.

“Are you addressing yourself to me?” said the ex-chancellor. “I thought, noble Count d’Ahlefeld, that you were speaking to yourself. What crime have you against me? Have I ever given an Iscariot kiss to a friend? Have I ever condemned, imprisoned a benefactor? him who I owed all, have I ever stripped of all? I am at a loss to know, my lord chancellor in office, why I have been

brought here. Doubtless to prove your ability in causing the heads of the innocent to fall. In fact I shall not be sorry to be able to judge, if you can compass my ruin equally as well as you are now ruining the country, and if a stroke of your pen will effect my death, as, by the addition of one letter of the alphabet, you brought troubles which nearly provoked a war with Sweden.”\*

“My lord president, and you, my lords,” said the secretary, bowing profoundly to the judges, “I demand that John Schumacker shall be silenced, if he continues thus to insult his grace, the president of this honored court.”

The bishop rose, and calmly said :

“Master Private Secretary, a prisoner cannot be denied a hearing.”

“You are right, my lord bishop,” exclaimed the president, hastily. “We wish to give full liberty to the defense. For the sake of his own interest, I should advise the prisoner to moderate his language.”

Schumacker shook his head, and coolly replied :

“Evidently Count d’Ahlefeld is surer of his case than in 1677.”

“Silence,” said the president, hastening to address the next prisoner, by asking his name.

A huge mountaineer, with his forehead bandaged, rose, saying :

“I am Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland.”

A shudder ran through the crowd.

Schumacker, whose head had fallen forward, darted a quick glance at his formidable neighbor, from whom the other prisoners kept aloof.

“Han of Iceland,” demanded the president, when the terror had somewhat subsided, “what have you to say to the court?”

Among the spectators, Ethel was no less struck with the appearance of this famous brigand, who had so long filled her imagination. Terrified, she looked with horror on this immense giant, a murderer, to whom her Ordener had perhaps fallen a victim. She was so pursued with this and other painful ideas, that she scarcely heard Han of Iceland’s coarse and embarrassed reply, except when he declared himself chief of the insurgents’ army.

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\* Count d’Ahlefeld, in a treaty between the two States, had given the King of Denmark the title of *Rex Gothorum*, which signified his power over Gothland, a Swedish province; whereas the Swedes would only acknowledge him as *Rex Gotorum*, King of the Gotts—the ancient appellation of the King of the Danes.

"Did you offer yourself, or were you instigated by any stranger to take the command of the rebels?"

"I did not offer myself," the brigand replied.

"Who suggested this crime?"

"A man called Hackett."

"Who was this Hackett?"

"Schumacker's agent, who called him Count of Griffenfeld."

The president then turned to Schumacker.

"Schumacker, do you know this Hackett?"

"You have forestalled me, Count d'Ahlefeld. I was about to ask you the same question."

"John Schumacker, hatred is a bad counselor. The court will know how to appreciate your defense."

The bishop's voice was again heard:

"Master Clerk of the Court," said he, turning toward the private secretary, the short man who seemed to be both recorder and prosecutor, "is this Hackett one of my flock?"

"No, your reverence."

"Is it known what has become of him?"

"He has disappeared beyond all possibility of finding him," said the secretary, in a voice which always seemed strained.

"I should say he had vanished altogether," interposed Schumacker.

"Has good search been made for this Hackett? Has any description been given of him, Master Clerk of the Court?" continued the bishop. Before the clerk could reply, one of the prisoners rose, a proud and severe looking young miner.

"You can easily have that," said he, in a loud tone. "This villain, Hackett, Schumacker's agent, is a short man, with an open-looking face, open as the jaws of Hades. Indeed, my lord bishop, his voice sounded very much like that of his lordship who is writing at that table, and whom your reverence calls clerk of the court. If this hall were less dark, and the gentleman there had less hair about his face, I am certain he would very much resemble that traitor, Hackett himself."

"Our brother is right," joined in the young miners, his two comrades in the dock.

"So, indeed!" muttered Schumacker, triumphantly.

The secretary shuddered involuntarily, either from fear or with indignation at thus being compared to Hackett.

The president also looked annoyed, and hastened to say:

"Prisoners, I command you to be silent until you are questioned, and do not attempt to insult a minister of justice by such degrading comparisons."

"But, my lord president," interposed the bishop, "this is only a question of identity. If there are some points of resemblance between the clerk and the culprit Hacket, all this might be of service——"

The president here interrupted him :

"Han of Iceland, you have had much to do with Hacket. Just to satisfy his reverence, say if he resembles our honored clerk of the court."

"Not in the least," replied the giant, unhesitatingly.

"There, my lord bishop, you hear for yourself what this man says?"

The bishop signified his satisfaction.

The president then questioned another prisoner in the usual way.

"What is your name?"

"Wilfred Kennybol, from the Kole Mountains."

"Were you one of the rebels?"

"Yes, my lord. Truth is worth more than life. I was taken prisoner at Black Pillar. I was the head of the mountaineers."

"Did you incite any men to rebellion?"

"The miners arose on account of the royal tax, because the government would not listen to their complaints. If you had only a mud hut and two old foxes' skins you surely would like to be master of them. Well, my lord, when the miners determined to revolt they asked us to join them. So small a service could scarcely be refused between brothers who repeat the same prayers and invoke the same patron saints. That is all."

"Did no one ferment, encourage, and lead on this insurrection?" said the president.

"A Master Hacket, who was always talking of releasing a prisoner at Munckholm, a count, whose agent he declared himself to be. We promised to do so. It little mattered to us if we set one person or more at liberty."

"Was not this count called Schumacker, or Griffenfeld?"

"Yes, that is right, your lordship."

"Did you ever see him?"

"No, my lord ; but if the old man who gave himself such a number of names just now is he, I must allow——"

"Well, well," interrupted the president.

"That he has a splendid gray beard, almost as good as



my sister Maase's father-in-law's, who lived till he was a hundred and twenty years old."

It was impossible to see in this gloomy hall if this reply were disappointing to the president; but, at all events, he quickly ordered the archers to display the gorgeous banners.

"Wilfred Kennybol, do you recognize these banners?"

"Yes; they were handed to us by Hacket, who also, in Count Schumacker's name, sent arms to the miners. We mountaineers did not want them, as we live by our carbine and game bag. I, my lord, here fastened like a fowl ready for roasting, have aimed, from the depths of the valley, at an old eagle, and brought him down from his loftiest flight, though he seemed but a sparrow or thrush when high up in the air."

"You hear, my lords," observed the clerk of the court, addressing the judges: "the prisoner Schumacker, through his agent Hacket, sent both arms and banners to the rebels."

"Kennybol, have you anything further to say?" inquired the president.

"Nothing. Only I do not deserve death. I only assisted the miners; and I can assure your lordships that, old sportsman that I am, I never fired on one of the king's deer."

The president made no reply, but hastened to question Kennybol's two companions, both chiefs of the miners. Jonas, the elder, but repeated what Kennybol had said. The younger man was the same who had remarked the resemblance between the clerk of the court and the treacherous Hacket. This was Norbith, who proudly owned his share in the revolt, but refused to answer any questions relating to Hacket or Schumacker. He said he had sworn to be silent, and he must keep his oath; and, notwithstanding threats and remonstrances, he remained firm. He said he had not rebelled for Schumacker, but for his mother's sake, who was perishing from cold and hunger. He might have deserved death, but it would be an act of injustice to condemn him, as it would cause his mother's death, and she was innocent."

When Norbith ceased speaking the clerk of the court summed up in a few words, dwelling on the fearful charges brought against the prisoners, particularly against Schumacker. He then read some of the seditious devices on the banners; he pointed out how the ex-chancellor's accomplices all agreed in their replies, even young Norbith's silence, though tied by his oath, was condemnatory.

"There remains one more prisoner to question," said he. "We have every reason to believe that he is a secret agent of the one who has watched so badly over the peace of the Drontheimhus. Even were he guiltless of connivance, his fatal negligence has favored this rebellion, cost the lives of these unfortunate men, and sent Schumacker to the scaffold, from which he was previously so generously saved by the king's clemency."

To Ethel's fears for Ordener was now added the horror of her father's doom, as she listened to these terrible words. The poor girl wept bitterly, while her father arose, and calmly said :

"Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I am lost in admiration at your ingenuity. Have you already requested the executioner to be in attendance?"

Ethel thought no grief could touch her now, but she soon realized the fallacy of this idea.

The sixth prisoner, now answering the president's questions, was a noble-looking man, who spoke in a firm and distinct tone.

"I am Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog."

The clerk, lost in amazement, exclaimed :

"The viceroy's son !"

"The viceroy's son !" echoed a thousand voices.

The president fell back in his chair, the judges leaned toward one another, looking like trees blown by a contrary wind. But the agitation was far greater among the audience. Some mounted the stone copings, others rushed to the iron gratings, one continual murmur ran throughout the court. The guards broke through their enforced silence, and added to the universal clamor by their ejaculations.

How can Ethel's mingled feelings of joy and grief be depicted. Ordener stood before her ; she could gaze on him, while he knew not she was present. Her well-beloved was there—her Ordener, whom she thought dead. He was lost to her. This friend had deceived her, and yet, with all this, she loved him still. This was no mere delusion, but Ordener himself, whom she had more frequently seen in her dreams than in reality. Was he there as a guardian angel, or an evil genius ? May she rest her hopes on him, or must she tremble for his safety ?

Before the spectators heard his name Ethel recognized him at once, and this knowledge, combined with other feelings, completely overpowered her. The poor girl

fainted, sinking like a flame that is extinguished by too much fuel.

Ethel recovered a second time through the care of the mysterious stranger. Her first glance was turned toward the young man, who still remained standing. He alone was calm amid the general clamor. When order was restored the words Ordener Guldenlew still rang in her ears. Ethel was grieved to see his arm in a sling, his cloak much torn, his trusty sword gone. Added to this, he was manacled. Nothing escaped her loving eyes. She could not clasp him to her, but her soul was filled with his image; and it must be said, to love's honor and shame, that in that very hall, which contained her father and her father's persecutors, Ethel saw but one man.

Silence being restored, the president proceeded in somewhat trembling accents to question the viceroy's son :

"My lord baron——"

"I am not termed here 'my lord baron,' but simply Ordener Guldenlew, just as the former Count of Griffenfeld is now called John Schumacker."

The president was astounded.

"Well, then, Ordener Guldenlew," added he, "doubtless it is by some mischance that you are placed in this position. You were traveling, and were taken prisoner by the rebels, who compelled you to join them, which would account for your being found in their ranks."

The secretary arose, saying :

"Noble judges, the name alone of the Viceroy of Norway's son is quite sufficient. Baron Ordener Guldenlew cannot be a rebel. Our illustrious president has clearly explained the reason of his arrest. The noble prisoner has been to blame for concealing his name. We must demand his immediate liberation, and that all proceedings should cease against him. We must express our regret that he should have occupied the same bench as that criminal Schumacker and his accomplices."

"What are you saying?" cried Ordener.

"The secretary, our public prosecutor, desists from all further proceedings against you," replied the president.

"He is in error, then," said Ordener, in a firm and distinct tone. "I alone ought to be accused, judged, and condemned." He hesitated a moment, and then slowly added :

"For I alone am guilty."

"You—guilty !" cried the president.

"You—guilty !" repeated the secretary.

The audience burst forth in exclamations of surprise.

The wretched Ethel shuddered at this confession, which brought death in its train for her Ordener, forgetful that by this means her father's life was saved.

"Silence in the court," cried the president, trying to gather his ideas together and regain his presence of mind.

"Ordener Guldenlew, explain yourself," said he.

The young man was lost in thought. He aroused himself with a deep sigh, then arose, and calmly replied :

"Yes, an infamous death awaits me—I, who had life before me in all its glory and happiness ; but God alone knows the heart's secret. I have one great duty to perform, for which my blood and honor may be sacrificed ; but I feel no remorse, and I shall die without repentance. Let your lordships not be surprised. There are mysteries in the human soul which you cannot fathom. Heaven alone can be their judge. Harken to my words ! Act toward me as your conscience dictates, but pardon these unfortunate men, more particularly Schumacker, who has already suffered for more crimes than any one man could commit. Yes, my noble judges, I am guilty, and the only guilty party. Schumacker is innocent ; the others were simply misled. The promoter of this rebellion was myself."

"You !" exclaimed the astonished president and secretary.

"Yes. Do not interrupt me, my lords. I am anxious to bring matters to a climax, and complete my own accusation, in order to justify these men. I instigated the miners to revolt in Schumacker's name. I distributed banners, gold, and arms in the Munckholm prisoner's name. Hacket was my agent."

At the mention of Hacket the clerk of the court looked completely stupefied.

"I will spare your time, my lords. I was taken in the midst of the miners, whom I had incited to rebel. I accomplished all without adherents. It is now for you to judge whether my crime admits of no denial ; if so, then the proof is clear that Schumacker is innocent ; and likewise the poor creatures you term his accomplices."

Thus saying, the young man raised his eyes to heaven.

Ethel was breathless with suspense. She had noticed how bitterly Ordener had mentioned her father's name, although he was trying to justify him. All seemed inexplicable to her, except the sense of impending misfortune, which she so clearly realized.

The president was evidently struck with the same feeling.

"If you alone are the promoter of this rebellion, what

motives nad you for taking such a step?" said he, looking as though his ears must have deceived him.

"I decline to say."

Ethel shuddered at the next question.

"Did you not carry on an intrigue with Schumacker's daughter?" pursued the president, angrily.

Ordener, looking straight at the bench, indignantly exclaimed :

"Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, be content with taking my life, and do not forget the respect you owe to a noble and innocent girl. Do not attempt to degrade her a second time!"

The poor girl flushed at the words "a second time," although she knew not why her defender lay such stress on them. The president clearly showed he understood them.

"Ordener Guldenlew, remember to respect the king's court of justice and the chief officials of the same. In the name of the bench, I reprimand you. I request you to confess the motive which impelled you to commit the crime of which you now accuse yourself."

"I must repeat, I cannot tell you."

"Was it not for Schumacker's deliverance?" inquired the clerk.

Ordener remained silent.

"It is useless for you to maintain this reserve, prisoner Ordener, for it has been proved that you were in communication with Schumacker," said the president. "This confession of yours in no way justifies him, but simply adds to his guilt. You went often to Munckholm. You must have had a wonderful attraction there, the proof of which is this diamond buckle. Do you recognize it?"

"Yes. By what chance——"

"Well; a dying rebel gave it to our secretary, saying you had given it to him as payment for rowing you from Drontheim port to Munckholm fortress. Now, I would ask your lordships, would Ordener Guldenlew give such a reward to a simple boatman if it were not a matter of vital importance for him to visit Schumacker's prison?"

"Ah," said the prisoner Kennybol, "his lordship is right. My poor comrade, Guldon Stayper, said the same, and I recognize this buckle as the one he had in his possession."

"Silence," cried the president. "It is for Ordener Guldenlew to speak."

"I do not deny I was anxious to see Schumacker. But as for the buckle, that says nothing. Diamonds are not allowed in the fortress. The boatman, while crossing,



complained of his poverty. I threw him this buckle, which I could not retain myself."

"Pardon me, my lord," interrupted the secretary, "this rule does not apply to the viceroy's son. You could then——"

"I did not wish to be known."

"Why?" said the president.

"That I cannot say."

"The very fact of your complete understanding with Schumacker and his daughter proves the object of your plot was their deliverance."

Schumacker, who had occasionally shrugged his shoulders during this time, now arose, saying:

"Deliver me! Why, the object of this infernal plot is to compromise and ruin me. Do you imagine Ordener Guldenlew would have admitted his share in this crime had he not been found in the midst of the rebels? I can plainly see he has inherited his father's hatred for me. As for any understanding he had with myself and daughter, let this cursed Guldenlew know that my daughter inherits my hatred for him, and the whole race of Guldenlew and of D'Ahlefeld."

Ordener sighed deeply. Ethel murmured a denial. Schumacker took his seat, trembling with passion.

"The court will decide," said the president.

While Schumacker was speaking, Ordener never raised his eyes. He recovered himself, and again addressed the court.

"Oh, noble judges, hear me. Well weigh the case. Remember Ordener Guldenlew alone is guilty. Schumacker is innocent, and the other unfortunate men were but tools of Hacket, my agent. I compassed all the rest."

"Most noble judges," Kennybol hastened to say, "I can vouch for the truth of his lordship's words. He confided the secret of his journey to me, at my brother Braall's house at Surb. He was then on his way to Walderberg Cave, in search of Han of Iceland, hoping to make him our chief. Naming him, will not I hope bring me bad luck. What the young master says is true—that we were led on by that cursed Hacket. This proves that we do not deserve death."

"Clerk of the court," said the president, "the trial has closed. Members of the bench, give your judgment."

The clerk stroked his lace bands, bowed to the court, and, with his eyes fixed on the president, pronounced the following words in a solemn tone:

"My lord president, most honored judges, the case for the prosecution is complete. Ordener Guldenlew has forever tarnished his glorious name by proving his own guilt, without establishing the ex-chancellor's innocence, or those of his accomplices, Han of Iceland, Wilfred Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith. I call upon you to declare the six prisoners guilty of high treason and conspiracy against our mighty sovereign."

A murmur went through the crowd, and the president was about to close the case, when the bishop claimed a moment's attention.

"Learned judges, it is but right that the prisoners' defense should come last. Would that they had a more able advocate, for I am old and feeble. What power remains to me I owe to God's mercy. I am surprised at the clerk of the court's stern request. There is nothing proved against my client Schumacker. He can in no way be associated with the miners' rebellion, since my other client, Ordener Guldenlew, declares that he made use of Schumacker's name as a watchword for this purpose. Moreover, he, Ordener Guldenlew, confesses that he alone is guilty of this reprehensible sedition. There is no evidence against Schumacker, and his case should be dismissed. The other prisoners have only been misguided. I, therefore recommend them to mercy. They are but like the wandering sheep of the Good Shepherd. And even young Ordener Guldenlew possesses one great merit in the eyes of the Lord—he confesses his crime. My lords, I pray you, consider that he is at an age when men are apt to stray and sometimes fall, yet God never forsakes them, nor fails to send them help in the time of trouble. Ordener Guldenlew has scarcely attained a fourth of the years which now bear me down. In passing sentence upon him take into consideration his youth and inexperience, and judge not that the life, so lately given him, must be forfeited."

The old man ceased, and again resumed his seat near Ordener, who greeted him with a smile. The judges retired to consider their verdict. The prisoners, guarded by halberdiers, sat quietly throughout the time their fate was being decided. Schumacker remained with his head bent down, lost in thought; the giant looked from right to left with silly assurance; Jonas and Kennybol held their hands clasped in prayer. Norbith, from time to time, stamped the ground, and clanked his chains. Between him and the venerable bishop sat Ordener, his arms

crossed, his eyes raised heavenward, listening to his reverence reciting the penitential psalms.

The moment the judges left, the crowd gave vent to their feelings. There before them was the famous captive of Munckholm, the fearful demon of Iceland; but, above all others, the viceroy's son was the center of attraction. Amid the confusion of voices, some expressed pity, others only laughter; and the sounds arose and fell like flames driven by the wind.

The long night hours passed, and the judges still continued their deliberations; the sentinels paced up and down before the door like two phantoms.

When dawn appeared, amid breathless silence, the president, followed by the judges, resumed their seats on the bench.

The clerk of the court during their absence seemed buried in thought, but on their return he bowed, and then again addressed them.

"My lord president, what is the result of the judgment which has been passed in the name of the king, without appeal? We are prepared to hear it with deep attention."

The judge to the right of the president arose, holding a parchment before him.

"His grace, our noble president, fatigued by the length of the trial, has deputed me, the High Syndic of the Drontheimhus, who presides over this honored court, to pass the verdict which has been drawn in the king's name. We are about to fulfill this painful though honorable duty. We must request the audience to keep silent while the king's just sentence is passed."

Amid the hush of the anxious crowd, the high syndic pronounced the following words in a forcible and solemn manner:

"In the name of our respected master and legitimate lord, Christian, king, this verdict is given by us, the judges in the High Court of Justice of the Drontheimhus. We have acted to the best of our belief concerning John Schumacker, State prisoner; Wilfred Kennybol, Kole mountaineer; Jonas and Norbith, royal miners; Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland; Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog; all accused of high treason and leze-majesty. Han of Iceland, further accused of assassination, incendiarism, and brigandage.

"1. John Schumacker—not guilty.

"2. Wilfred Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith—guilty. But

they are recommended to mercy, as they were misguided men.

"3. Han of Iceland—guilty of all the crimes with which he has been charged.

"4. Ordener Guldenlew—guilty of high treason."

The judge paused. Ordener gave him a glance of complete satisfaction.

"John Schumacker, the court absolves you of all participation in this crime. You return to your prison.

"Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith, your sentence is reduced to imprisonment for life, and a fine of a thousand crowns each.

"Han of Klipstadur, assassin and incendiary, you will be taken this evening on to the parade at Munckholm, and hanged by the neck until you are dead.

"Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, you will be stripped of every rank in the presence of this court, you will be conducted to this same parade, carrying a torch in your hand, where your head will be severed, your body burned, your ashes cast to the winds, your head placed on a pole.

"All the prisoners may now retire. Such is the king's just sentence."

The high syndic had scarcely finished his funereal discourse, when a piercing cry rang through the court, which struck the hearers with greater horror than the judgment itself. The condemned Ordener looked both calm and bright, but at this fearful sound his face became of an ashen hue.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"TILL DEATH US DOTH SEVER."

The judgment has been given, and nothing now remains but the final stroke to fall. The young man's noble conspiracy has succeeded, his well-beloved will be safe under her father's protection, for Schumacker's life has been saved at the expense of his own.

Let those people who have considered this generous Ordener guilty or mad, judge him now, he, who joined the rebels solely to frustrate the plot against Schumacker; and if powerless to do so, determined to spare him all punishment by taking everything on his own shoulders.

"Alas," thought he, "Schumacker is doubtless guilty, but his long captivity and misfortunes drove him to the

crime. Under the circumstance, even such a deed is pardonable. He longed for freedom, and incited this rebellion in order to compass his end. What a fate for my Ethel, if her father were to lose his life on the scaffold. Another disgrace added to her sorrows, without protection, without assistance; either to remain alone in her captivity, or to wander in the midst of a crowd of enemies."

It was this that made him gladly take the accusation on himself. Can there be greater happiness than in sacrificing one's self for the sake of the well-beloved, though it were but for a smile or a tear?

He was found among the rebels, told a generous lie; was condemned by the very judges who had accused Schumacker, sentenced to a cruel and ignominious death, and his name forever blasted. But what mattered all this, since he had saved his Ethel's father from such a fate?

He is now in chains in a damp cell, where light and air are but faintly admitted through gloomy port-holes. The only food he will ever have for the remainder of his existence is by his side—black bread and a pitcher of water. Though weighed down in chains from head to foot, he is lost in delightful dreams, and in one hour he realizes more what life is, than another feels in the space of a year.

"My memory may still be dear to some. I know that, at least, one heart will beat for me, a tear will fall for the blood so freely given. She will, perhaps, regret him who sacrificed his life for her, and in my loved one's dreams her friend may sometimes find a place. Who can tell what comes after death? Perhaps the soul, delivered from its prison-house, may be allowed to watch over those well-beloved captives here below, and hold some intercourse with them, whereby they may secretly dispense some angelic virtue, and diffuse joy from Heaven above."

At the moment of Ordener's great sacrifice he was oppressed with the thought of Schumacker's inveterate hatred. He was haunted by the remembrance of that piercing cry which echoed through the court when sentence was passed on him, for he alone recognized the voice—his Ethel's. Should he ever see her again? should he ever hear the voice and press the hand of her for whom he was about to die? Just then the old rusty hinges grated in their sockets. The young man thought it was the executioner come to do his duty. He was mistaken. The door was thrown open, and Ordener gazed on a pale and wan-



looking face, which he feared must be some delusive vision of Heaven's own creation. But no! It was she—his Ethel!

She threw herself into his arms, kissing the very chains of infamy with her unsullied lips, bedewing his hands with her tears. She could not speak, for her heart was ready to break with grief.

He had never known such supreme happiness. He pressed her fondly to him; and no power under Heaven could have separated them. His near approaching death intensified his feelings, and he held her as though it were for all eternity.

Ordener asked her no questions. She was there, and that was all-sufficient; for he well knew how love could overcome great difficulties.

Both were silent. What is the mere sound of a voice, compared to the inner language of the soul? There are some deep emotions which cannot be expressed.

The young girl at length raised her head from his shoulder.

"Ordener, I am come to save you," said she, in a hopeful tone, though her heart sank within her.

"Save me, Ethel? You deceive yourself; flight is impossible."

"Alas! I know that but too well. The castle is filled with soldiers. Every door is guarded by archers and jailers, who are ever on the watch; but"—here she hesitated—"I can suggest other means."

"Ethel, do not buoy yourself up with vain hopes; for they will be cruelly dispelled in a few hours' time by a stroke of the ax."

"Oh, pray cease, Ordener. You shall not die. Banish this fearful idea. Yet I would have you picture it in all its horrors to me, that I may complete the sacrifice which insures your safety."

"Your sacrifice! What do you mean?" said Ordener looking at her tenderly.

She buried her head in her hands, and cried in her anguish:

"Oh, God! help me."

With a great effort she recovered herself, and smiled up into his face, like an angel going to the realms above.

"Listen, my Ordener. The scaffold will never be raised for you. You can live by giving your promise to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeldt."

"Ulrica d'Ahlefeld! Is it possible that my Ethel can have uttered that name?"

"Do not interrupt me," said she, with the calmness of a martyr undergoing torture. "I have come on the part of Countess d'Ahlefeld. You will receive the king's pardon when you have promised to wed the grand chancellor's daughter. I implore you to accede to this, and live for her. I was chosen as messenger, thinking I should have some influence over you."

"Ethel," replied the condemned man, coldly, "on leaving my cell, tell them to send the executioner."

Pale and trembling she stood before him; then, falling on her knees, she wrung her hands, and faintly said:

"What have I done to him?"

Ordener lowered his eyes and kept silent.

"My lord!" she cried, dragging herself to him, "you do not answer. Will you not give me one word? must I feel there is nothing to live for?"

"Ethel, you have then ceased to love me," he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes.

"Just Heaven," cried the poor girl, wildly pressing his hand; "he tells me I do not love him! You, my Ordener, can you really have said these words?"

"You despise me; therefore you cannot love me."

He immediately repented this cruel speech. Ethel threw her arms around him, and with heartrending accents, cried:

"Pardon me, my adored Ordener; forgive me, as I forgive you. I despise you! Are you not my pride, my love, my all? Did my words convey anything but deep love and the greatest respect for you? Alas! for your severity, when I thought to save you, my own Ordener, by sacrificing my whole life for yours."

"Well, then," said the young man, kissing away her tears, "was it not showing but little regard for me when you proposed that I should purchase life at the expense of my oath, my very love itself, and abandon my Ethel, for whose sake I am willing to shed the last drop of my blood?"

"Ordener," said Ethel, sighing deeply, "do not judge me hastily. I have greater powers of endurance than women generally have; but from my very dungeon I can see them erecting the scaffold on the parade. Oh, Ordener! you cannot picture my grief as I gaze with horror on those men who are slowly preparing for the death of him who is my very life. The Countess d'Ahlefeld, who was

seated near me when your fatal sentence was pronounced, came to the dungeon, where I had gone with my father, and suggested that I should make you this proposition. If I wished to save your life, she offered me this odious means of doing so. I must crush all hopes of happiness, renounce you, and give my Ordener up to another, that she may take the poor forsaken Ethel's only joy. I had to choose between my own irremediable misfortune or your death, and I did not hesitate for a moment."

He raised this angel's hand to his lips.

"And I do not hesitate either, Ethel. You would not offer me life and Ulrica d'Ahlefeld if you knew why I am really about to die."

"What! is there some mystery?"

"I must keep this secret from you, my Ethel, leaving you in ignorance whether to be grateful or to hate me for making this final decision."

"You prefer death! Just Heaven, can it be true that the scaffold is being erected for my Ordener? that no human power can save him from this fate? Pray look upon me, your companion, your very slave, and promise, my well-beloved, not to be angry at my words. Are you sure—answer your Ethel as you would your God—that you could not be happy with this woman, this Ulrica d'Ahlefeld? She is doubtless beautiful, gentle, and good, and better far than her for whom you are about to sacrifice your life. My Ordener, my dear friend, do not turn your head aside. You are so young and so noble to perish on the scaffold. You could live with her in some gay city, where you would soon forget this gloomy dungeon. Your days would pass in peace, and you would hear nothing of me. Banish me from your heart, and even from your thoughts; but live, Ordener, and leave me here to die. Believe me, when once you are in another's arms you need have no anxiety about me, for I shall not suffer long."

She ceased, for her voice was lost in tears. In her very despair there was still the fixed determination to gain the fatal victory, which to her meant death.

"Ethel, cease, and let no name but our own pass our lips at such a time as this."

"Alas! alas! then all is useless, and you will die?"

"It must be so. I will gladly perish on the scaffold for your sake; whereas I should go with horror to the altar with any other woman. Do not press this subject; you only distress and offend me."

She wept, and still continued to murmur:

"Oh, God ! he then must die, and in such an infamous manner."

"Believe me, Ethel," said the condemned man, smiling, "there is less dishonor in such a death as mine than in the terms you propose for purchasing my life."

He turned his eyes away for a moment, and they fell on an old man in priestly garb standing in the door-way.

"What do you want here?" said Ordener, roughly.

"My lord, I came with Countess d'Ahlefeld's fair messenger. You did not perceive me, and I have been a silent witness here."

Ordener and Ethel had only eyes for each other. The latter in the excitement had quite forgotten her companion.

"I am," continued the old man, "the priest charged——"

"I understand you," hastily rejoined the prisoner. "I am ready."

The priest came toward him, pronouncing these solemn words :

"God is also ready to receive you, my son."

"Reverend sir, your face seems familiar to me. I have seen you before."

The minister bowed.

"I remember meeting you, my son, in the Tower of Vyglä. We can both show the fallacy of human promises. You assured me that twelve unfortunate criminals should receive their pardon. I, not knowing you were the viceroy's son, did not credit your words. You, my lord, reckoned that your rank and influence would obtain this concession."

Ordener completed what Athanasius Munder did not dare to finish.

"And now I can obtain no clemency, not even for myself. I thought little of the future, and this assurance has been punished, for time has proved my weakness."

The priest lowered his head.

"God is powerful," said he, and, with a kindly look at Ordener, he added :

"God is good."

"Listen, your reverence ; I wish to keep the promise I made to you at Vyglä. When I am no more, go to Bergen, and tell the viceroy, my father, what his son's last wishes were—pardon for your twelve *proteges*—and I am sure he will grant it."

A tear fell down the old man's face.

"My son, how noble of you to think of pardon for

others at the very time you so courageously reject it for yourself. I was deeply moved by your refusal, while I could but blame you for such an excess of passionate emotion. I repeated to myself, '*Unde scelus!*' How is it that a man whose feelings so nearly approach perfection, can be guilty of the crime for which you are condemned?"

"Father, I have kept the secret from this angel, and I cannot reveal it to you; only I would have you believe that crime was not the incentive for my conduct."

"What do you mean? Explain yourself, my son."

"Do not insist," replied the young man, firmly. "Let me carry to the grave the secret which has compassed my death."

"He cannot be guilty," murmured the priest.

He drew forth a black cross, and placed it on a rough-hewn altar fixed against the damp prison wall. He further added a lighted lamp and an open Bible.

"My son, I will return in a few hours, leaving you to prayer and meditation. Let us now go," said he to Ethel, who had remained silent during this solemn time; "we must quit the prisoner. Time is flying."

"Your reverence," said Ethel, with a heavenly smile, "I cannot go until you have united Ethel Schumacker with Ordener Guldenlew, her betrothed."

Turning to Ordener, she continued:

"If you were still of the same rank and influence, and free, I would not unite my wretched fate with yours; but now that my misfortunes cannot affect you, for, like myself, you are a disgraced and oppressed captive, and about to die, I dare hope I may be your companion in death, my Ordener, as I could never have been your companion in life. Your very love must tell you, that when you die, I shall cease to live."

The condemned man fell at her feet, kissing the hem of her garment.

"You, father," continued she to the old man, "will stand us in lieu of parents or family. May this cell be our temple, this stone our altar. Here is my ring, and we shall kneel in God's presence and before you. Pray, bestow your blessing on us, and read the sacred words which unite Ethel Schumacker to her lord, Ordener Guldenlew."

The priest was filled with astonishment and pity at the kneeling figures before him.

"My children, what are you doing?"



"Father," said the young girl, "time is flying; God and death are awaiting us."

There are moments when we are governed by some irresistible power. The priest felt this, and, with a sigh, he replied :

"May the Lord forgive me if I am to blame in making this concession. You love each other, and there remains but little time on earth for you to gratify this feeling. I do not consider I am failing in my duty by giving your love a rightful claim."

He proceeded with the irrevocable ceremony; and after the priest's final blessing, they both arose as husband and wife. The condemned man now fully realized all the bitterness of death, since life offered so much bliss. The young girl felt all the pride of being a young wife.

"Has not the prospect of death brought us happiness, my Ordener, since in life we could never have been united? Would you have me tell you, love, what I shall do? I shall place myself at my dungeon window, in full view of the scaffold, so that our souls may together wing their flight to heaven. If I die before the ax falls, then my body shall await yours, that the same tomb may inclose the bridegroom and his bride. Is it not so, my adored one?"

He pressed her to his heart, and murmured the words which filled his whole soul :

"Ethel, now you are really mine!"

"My children," said the chaplain, tenderly, "the time has now drawn near when you must bid each other farewell."

"Alas!" cried Ethel, throwing herself at the condemned man's feet. "Farewell, my lord, my well-beloved Ordener. Pray give me your blessing."

The prisoner pronounced the touching words, and turned to salute the venerable Athanasius Munder, who, to his surprise, was kneeling before him.

"What would you have of me, father?"

The old man humbly replied :

"Your blessing, my son."

"May Heaven bless you and bestow on you as much happiness as your prayers have brought to other mortals," said Ordener, with deep emotion.

Soon the gloomy vault echoed the last farewells, the final embraces were given, soon the heavy bolts were drawn, and the iron door separated the youthful husband

from his wife. They, who were about to die, had still the hope that heaven would be their meeting-place.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE MONSTER IN HIS TRUE COLORS.

"Baron Voethaun, colonel of the Munckholm musketeers, which soldier in your regiment made Han of Iceland prisoner at the Black Pillar? Name him, that he may receive the thousand crowns promised for this capture," said the president.

The court was still assembled. According to ancient custom in Norway, when judgment is given without appeal, the judges must remain on the bench till the sentence be carried out. The giant stands before them, with a rope around his neck, by which in a few hours he will be suspended. The colonel, who was placed near the clerk's table, arose, bowed to the bench and the bishop, who had resumed his official seat.

"Your lordships, the soldier who took Han of Iceland prisoner is here. His name is Toric Belfast, the second-best musketeer in my regiment."

"Let him come and receive the promised reward," said the president.

A young soldier, in the uniform of the Munckholm musketeers, stepped forward.

"You are Toric Belfast?"

"Yes, your grace."

"You took Han of Iceland prisoner?"

"Yes, may it please your excellency, by the aid of Beelzebub."

A heavy purse was placed on the bench.

"Do you recognize this man as the famous Han of Iceland?" said the president, indicating the enchained giant.

"I know my pretty Cattie's face better than Han of Iceland's, but I swear, by the glory of Belphegor, that if Han of Iceland be anywhere, he is in this great devil's form."

"Draw near, Toric Belfast. Here are the thousand crowns promised by the High Court of Justice."

The soldier was eagerly rushing forward, when a voice in the crowd exclaimed :

"Musketeer of Munckholm, you did not take Han of Iceland prisoner."

"Well, by all the happy devils," cried the soldier. "At the present moment I have nothing but my pipe to offer, but I vow I will hand over ten thousand golden crowns to him who has just given me the denial, if he can prove the truth of his words."

Crossing his arms, he looked with perfect assurance around the audience, and added :

"Let him who has just spoken come forward."

"I am the man," said a short individual, making his way to the center of the court.

The new-comer was wrapped in matting, made of rush and seal-fur, such as is used by the Greenlanders, which fell from the shoulders, and gave him the appearance of a conical shaped hut. His beard and long bushy hair were black, the little that could be seen of his eyebrows was red, the rest of his face was truly hideous. Neither his arms nor hands were visible.

"Ah, so you are the man?" said the soldier, with a burst of laughter ; "and it is you, my fine sir, who had the honor of taking this diabolical giant?"

The little man shook his head, and replied with a malicious smile :

"Yes, I did so."

Baron Voethaun recognized this singular man as the same mysterious being who at Skongen had given him notice of the rebel's approach. Chancellor d'Ahlefeld saw before him the host of the Ruin of Arbar. The clerk of the court knew him as a certain peasant of Oelmoe, who wore the same kind of matting, and who had shown him Han of Iceland's retreat. These three persons, being separated, were unable to communicate to each other their passing impression, and they were by no means certain of the fact, owing to the individual's different disguises.

"And so it was really you?" said the soldier, ironically. "By the look in your eyes, if it were not for that Greenland costume of yours, I should be inclined to think you were the same odd-shaped dwarf who wanted to quarrel with me at the Spladgest about a fortnight since, the very day they brought in the miner Gill Stadt's corpse."

"Gill Stadt," echoed the little man, shuddering.

"Yes, Gill Stadt," continued the musketeer, indifferently, "the jilted lover of a girl who had taken up with one of our comrades. Gill, like an idiot, died for her."

"Was there not also the body of an officer belonging to your regiment, at the Spladgest?" inquired the little man.

"Precisely so. I shall ever remember that day, for while at the Spladgest I quite forgot all about the retreat, and on my return to the fortress I narrowly escaped being degraded. That officer was Captain Dispolsen."

At the mention of this name the clerk of the court immediately arose.

"These two people are trespassing on the court's time. We must beg you, my lord president, to put an end to this useless discourse."

"By my Cattie's honor, I wish for nothing better," said Toric Belfast, "provided your lordships will award me the thousand crowns promised for Han, for I made him prisoner."

"You lie," cried the little man.

The soldier grasped his sword.

"Scoundrel, you are fortunate in being in the presence of justice, for a soldier, not even a musketeer, dare raise a finger here."

"The reward is mine," pursued the little man, coldly; "without me you could never take Han of Iceland."

The soldier retorted furiously that he had found Han of Iceland lying semi-conscious on the battle-field, and had taken him prisoner.

"That is all very well," rejoined his adversary; "you may have taken him, but it was I who knocked him down. Had I not done so you would never have captured him; therefore the reward of a thousand crowns belongs to me."

"It is false. You never overthrew him. He was struck down by a spirit, who appeared in the skin of some beast."

"It was I."

"No, no, I tell you."

The president requested silence, and again asked Colonel Voethaun if Toric Belfast had really brought in Han of Iceland prisoner. The reply being in the affirmative, he declared that the soldier was entitled to the reward.

The little man gnashed his teeth, and just as the musketeer eagerly pressed forward to receive the purse, he cried:

"One minute, my lord president. According to the high syndic's decree, this sum belongs to him who should deliver up Han of Iceland."

"Well, what then?" said the judges.

Turning toward the giant, the little man exclaimed:

"This man is not Han of Iceland."

A murmur of astonishment ran through the court.

The president and his secretary seemed both greatly agitated.

"No, this money does not belong to that cursed Munchholm musketeer," said the little man, fiercely, "for that man is not Han of Iceland!"

"Halberdiers, seize that madman," cried the president. "He has lost his senses."

The bishop then interposed:

"Honored president, permit me to observe, by your refusal to hear this man you deprive the condemned men here of all chance of escape. I must request that the inquiry continue."

"Reverend bishop, the court is anxious to satisfy you," replied the president.

"You have sworn," said he, turning to the giant, "that you are Han of Iceland. Do you still declare the same, now that you are sentenced to death?"

"I swear I am Han of Iceland," the giant answered.

"You hear what he says, my lord bishop?"

The little man shouted:

"You lie, you Kole mountaineer. Why persist in bearing a name which will be your destruction? Remember how fatal it has already proved to you."

"I am Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland," stoically answered the giant, keeping his eyes fixed on the clerk of the court.

Approaching the Munchholm musketeer, who was listening attentively to this curious scene, the little man cried:

"Kole mountaineer, Han of Iceland partakes of human blood, 'tis said. If you are he, here is some. Drink it, I say."

He instantly stabbed the musketeer to the heart, with a dagger he had concealed beneath the matting, and threw the corpse at the feet of the giant.

The crowd was horror-stricken, the soldiers on guard drew back from the giant, and terrified cries arose on all sides. The little man, quick as lightning, plunged his dagger into the mountaineer, whose identity was now discovered, as he fell on the soldier's body.

Throwing aside the matting, wig, and false beard, the monster showed himself in all his hideousness, clothed in the skins of beasts.

His appearance created greater horror among the spec-



tators than the instrument streaming with the blood of his two victims.

"Ha, ha, judges; where is Han of Iceland now?"

"Guards, seize that monster," cried the terrified president.

Hurling his dagger down, the creature shouted:

"That is useless to me, as there are no more soldiers from Munckholm here."

The halberdiers and archers prepared to take him by assault, as they would a fortress, but he made no resistance, and quietly gave himself up. He was chained to the prisoners' bench. A litter bore away his victims, one of whom, the mountaineer, still breathed.

It is impossible to picture the terror and indignation of the whole court during this horrible scene.

The brigand sat calm and unmoved in the fatal dock. The curiosity of the crowd overcame all other feelings, and their rapt attention kept them quiet.

The venerable bishop arose.

"Your lordships——" said he.

The brigand hastily interrupted him.

"Bishop of Drontheim, I am Han of Iceland; do not attempt to defend me."

"Noble president——" said the clerk of the court, rising.

The monster cut short his words.

"Clerk of the court, I am Han of Iceeland; don't trouble yourself to accuse me."

Standing there with his feet steeped in blood, he looked ferociously around. Judges, guards, spectators, all were terrified at this man's glance—he, who stood alone, disarmed, and in chains.

"Listen, judges. Do not expect much from me. I am the demon of Klipstadur. My mother came from that old Iceland, the island of volcanoes. It was formerly only a mountain, but a giant falling from heaven crushed in the summit. You hardly want me to tell you about myself. I am a descendant of Ingulphus the Exterminator, whose spirit exists in me. I have committed more murders and created more incendiarisms than the whole of you have passed judgments. I have a secret in common with Chancellor d'Ahlefeld. I should delight in drinking all the blood in your bodies. My nature is to hate men, my mission is to injure them. Colonel of the Munckholm musketeers, it was I who warned you that the miners would pass through Black Pillar, as I was certain you would

then create great slaughter among them in those defiles. It was I who hurled the blocks of granite on your regiment, crushing a whole battalion, just to avenge my son. Judges, now that my son is dead, I come here in search of death. I am weighed down by Ingulphus' spirit, because I alone can transmit it, and I have no heir. I am tired of life, as I have no successor to whom I can inculcate my principles or show an example. Besides, my thirst is quenched with the blood quaffed; and now here I am, and you can drink mine."

He ceased, and the echo of his fearful words ran through the crowd.

"My son," said the bishop, "what made you commit so many crimes?"

The brigand laughed.

"Upon my word, reverend bishop, it was not to enrich myself, like your brother the Bishop of Borglum.\* Something within me urged me on."

"The Lord does not always abide in all His ministers," humbly replied the old man. "You insult me, while my wish is to defend you."

"Your reverence is only wasting time. Just ask your brother, the Bishop of Scalholt, in Iceland. By Ingulphus! it would be strange, indeed, if two bishops should watch over my life—one at n.° cradle and the other at my death. Bishop, you are an old idiot."

"My son, do you believe in God?"

"Why not? I hope there is an Almighty, that I may have the chance of being blasphemous."

"Stop! wretched man! You are at the point of death, and yet you refuse to throw yourself at Christ's feet!"

"And if I did," retorted Han, with a shrug, "it would be after the style of the Kole policeman, who kissed the king's foot, and knocked his majesty over."

The bishop was deeply moved, and resumed his seat.

"Now, judges," continued Han of Iceland, "what are you hesitating about? If I were in your place and you in mine, I would not keep you so long waiting for your sentence of death."

The judges retired, but returned after a short deliberation. The president delivered judgment in the usual form, condemning Han of Iceland to be hanged by the neck till death should ensue.

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\* Some chroniclers assert that a Bishop of Borglum, in 1525, was famous for his brigandism. He was in league with the pirates who infested the coast of Norway, so it was said.

"That is all right," said the brigand. "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I know enough about you to hang you, but live on as you cause men so much harm. Well, I am sure now of not going to Nysthiem."\*

The clerk of the court ordered the guards to place Han in the Lion of Sleswig dungeon, while a cell was prepared for him adjoining the Munckholm musketeers' quarters.

"And so I am to be near the Munckholm musketeers!" repeated the monster, gleefully.

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## CHAPTER XL.

### THE MOTLEY DRESS.

Before dawn, just about the time Ordener's sentence was being passed at Munckholm, Oglypiglap, former assistant to Benignus Spiagudry, and now his successor as keeper of the Drontheim Spladgest, was awakened by several heavy knocks from outside. He rose reluctantly, swearing at the dazzling light of his brass lantern and the dampness of the mortuary, and opened the door to those who had allowed him so little repose. Some fishermen presented themselves, bearing a litter covered with rushes and seaweed, on which a body lay, that they had found in Lake Sparbo. They deposited their burden, and Oglypiglap gave them a receipt for the same, in order that they should claim their reward.

When alone in the Spladgest he began to strip the corpse of a man remarkable for his length and thinness. The first thing he noticed was an immense wig.

"I have seen this wig before. Why, it belonged to that elegant young Frenchman; and here are Postilion Cramner's top-boots, the poor fellow who was crushed under his horses. What the duse does this mean? Here is Professor Singramtax's black coat, the old scholar who lately drowned himself. Who can this new-comer be, dressed up in the clothes of all my old acquaintances?"

He examined the face, but it had lost all form and feature. He searched the pockets, and found a slimy old parchment. Wiping it carefully with his leather apron, he succeeded in reading these half-effaced words:

"Rudbeck; Saxon, the grammarian; Arngrim, Bishop

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\* According to popular belief, all people dying of maladies or old age were cast into the Nysthiem, or Hades of the decrepit.

of Holum. There are only two counties in Norway, Larvig, and Jarlberg, and one barony. There are silver mines at Kongsberg; loadstone, asbestos at Sund-Moer; amethysts at Guldbranshal; chalcedony, agates, jasper, in the Faroe Isles. At Noukahiva, in time of famine, men eat their wives and children. Thormodus Thorfœus; Isleef, Bishop of Scalholt, the first Iceland historian. Mercury played at chess with the moon, and gained the seventy-second part of a day. Maelstrom, a whirlpool. *Hirundo*, *hirudo*. Cicero; chick-peas: glory. Frode, the scholar. Oden consulted the head of Mimer, the sage. Mahomet and his pigeon. Sertoriou and his goat. The better the soil, less the gypsum."

"I cannot believe my eyes," cried Oglypiglap, letting the parchment fall. "Why, this is in the writing of my old master, Benignus Spiagudry."

On examining the corpse more closely, he recognized the long hands, the scanty hair, and the body of the unfortunate man.

"They were not far wrong," thought he, shaking his head, "when they accused him of sacrilege and necromancy. Satan must have carried him off, and drowned him in Lake Sparbo. Who would have imagined that Dr. Spiagudry, who kept others so long here, in his hotel for the dead, should one day be brought here himself."

The little philosophical Laplander was placing the body on one of the six granite slabs, when he observed that some heavy weight was attached with a strap to the unfortunate Spiagudry's neck.

"It is most likely a stone, fastened to his neck by the devil when he pitched him into the lake."

He was mistaken, for it proved to be a small iron casket, shut down with a clasp, stamped with a coat-of-arms.

"There is doubtless some deviltry in this box," said he. "This man was a sorcerer, and committed sacrilege. I had better take the casket to the bishop. There may be a demon inside."

Leaving the corpse in the mortuary, he carried the casket to the bishop's palace, muttering some prayers on the way, as a safeguard against the contents of the terrible box he was carrying.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### LIKE MEETS LIKE AND SHUDDERS.

Han of Iceland and Schumacker were both confined in the dungeon of Sleswig. The ex-chancellor, though proved innocent of the crime, was nevertheless dwelling bitterly on his fate, as he walked slowly up and down. The condemned brigand, guarded on all sides, only laughed at his chains. The two prisoners had long been silently observing each other, innately knowing they were both enemies to mankind.

"Who are you?" inquired the ex-chancellor.

"I will soon tell you my name, that you may shun me. I am Han of Iceland."

"Take my hand," said Schumacker, going up to him.

"Do you want me to devour it?"

"Han of Iceland, I like you because you detest mankind."

"For that same reason I hate you!"

"Listen to me. Like yourself, I hate men; because I have tried to benefit them, and they returned me evil for good."

"You cannot abhor them as I do, for they have benefited me, and I have returned evil for good."

Schumacker shuddered at the expression of the monster's face. He could have no bond of sympathy with a nature like that.

"Yes," continued the ex-chancellor, "I execrate men because I have found them cruel and ungrateful knaves. It is to them I owe all my misfortunes."

"So much the better. I owe them all my happiness in life."

"What happiness?"

"The joy of feeling their yet breathing form shrink, as I tear the flesh to pieces with my teeth, and their warm blood refreshing my parched lips. What can exceed the pleasure of smashing human beings against the edge of rocky corners, and hearing the victims' cries mingling with the sound of the crushing bones? Those are the enjoyments men have given me."

Schumacker was horror-stricken, and stepped back from



the monster toward whom he had lately approached with such pride, thinking he had met with a kindred spirit. He now buried his face in his hands, crying with shame and indignation. The tears were not shed on account of the human race; but he was filled with remorse for the feelings he had himself shown. His noble heart was humiliated at the hatred he had evinced toward men when he saw it reflected in such a creature as Han of Iceland.

"Well," said the monster, laughing, "what does mankind's enemy say now? Do you still dare to boast that you resemble me?"

The old man shuddered.

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, "rather than hate them as you do, I would prefer to love them."

The guards came forward to take the monster into a more secure cell.

Schumacker, left to himself, sat lost in thought, but he was no longer an enemy to all mankind.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE SCHEMER OUTWITTED.

The fatal hour had arrived. The sun had scarcely risen above the horizon, the guards were doubled in Munckholm Castle, and before every door fierce sentinels paced to and fro. The uproar in the town reached the gloomy fortress, itself the scene of great excitement. The crape-muffled drums were slowly beating, the cannon from the tower rolled forth at intervals, and the heavy dungeon bell tolled with deep and prolonged tones. Boats came from every point to the formidable rock, heavily charged with passengers. The crowd kept steadily increasing on the parade, surrounding the scaffold, which was also draped in black, and well guarded by a detachment of the military. A man in red serge was promenading the fatal platform, occasionally resting on his ax, and trying the block to test its firmness. Torches were burning in front of the scaffold, before which a stake was placed, bearing a signboard engraven with these words, Ordener Guldenlew, traitor. A large black flag waved from the top of Sleswig dungeon.

Meanwhile Ordener reappeared in the assembled court,

the bishop alone being absent, as his office for the defence was over.

The viceroy's son was in black, wearing the collar of the Order of the Dannebrog. His face was pale, but it bore the same haughty expression. The condemned man stood alone, as he was summoned before the chaplain, Athanasius Munder, had returned. Although Ordener was prepared for the sacrifice, still he could not help bitterly regretting his fate. Ethel's husband would have chosen a far different ending than the grave now that he was united to his love. Now that the time had arrived when he would shortly be beyond all the prayers and dreams which had beguiled his prison hours, he trusted in God and love to give him strength to bear the trial.

The crowd, wrapped in deep attention, was more moved than the condemned man himself. His rank and horrible fate awakened both feelings of envy and pity. Many were present at his punishment without knowing the crime for which he was about to suffer. It is strange that men should take pleasure in witnessing the sight of human agony. They eagerly watch the features of the one about to die, as though expecting that the wretched man's eyes would express some revelation from heaven or hell, or that death would cast its shadow over him. They go to see how a man can look when all hope has fled—this being, full of strength and health, who breathes and lives like themselves, yet who in a few short moments will cease to breathe, to live. He has never injured them, and they pity him; but none will venture to help the unfortunate wretch, now on the verge of death, without being permitted the final gasp, and who is shortly to be struck off at a single blow—this life, which society cannot give, yet ruthlessly takes away, with all the pomp of judicial murder, tending only to inflame the imagination of the spectators.

Time, with its indefinite delays, condemns us all to death, yet it is a strange and grievous sight to watch the unfortunate being who knows his hour is nigh.

Ordener was brought into court that he might be stripped of his rank and honors, previous to mounting the scaffold.

The assembly was scarcely restored to calmness, when the president, commanding that a respectful silence should be maintained, ordered the condemned man to remain before him on bended knee, while he read in a clear, distinct

tone the following words from the archives of the Knights of the Dannebrog:

"Christian, by the grace of Almighty God, King of Denmark, Norway, the Vandals and the Goths; Duke of Sleswig, Holstein, Stormarie, and of Dytmarsa; Count of Oldenburg and of Delmenhurst; also on the proposition of the grand chancellor, created Count of Griffenfeld (here the president spoke so rapidly that the name was scarcely heard), Knight of the royal Order of the Dannebrog, founded by our illustrious ancestor, Saint Walde-mar, in memory of the Dannebrog standard, which came direct from heaven to our blessed kingdom. It would be against the precepts of this Divine order if one of its knights were allowed to abuse with impunity the honor and holy laws, both of Church and State.

"We order that any knight of the order, who has given his soul to the devil by means of felony or treachery, shall kneel in God's presence, and in that position to be publicly censured by a judge, and then forever degraded of his rank as Knight of our royal Order of Dannebrog."

Here the president closed the book.

"Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog, you have been guilty of high treason, a crime for which your head is to be severed, your body burned, and your ashes cast to the winds. Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, you have rendered yourself unworthy to rank amid the Knights of Dannebrog; therefore prepare yourself, for I am about to publicly degrade you in the name of the king."

Resting his hand on the book, the president was going to pronounce the fatal formula on Ordener, who still remained calm and unmoved, when a door to the right of the bench was thrown open, and an usher announced his reverence the Bishop of the Drontheimhus.

The bishop entered, leaning on the arm of another priest.

"Stop! my lord president," cried he, with a force beyond his years. "Stop! I say. May Heaven be praised. I have come in time."

The assembly listened with renewed attention, foreseeing that some fresh event was about to occur.

"Your reverence must allow me to remark that your presence is useless here," answered the president, angrily. "The condemned man is on the point of being degraded, and his last moments are at hand."

"Beware of touching him who is guiltless in the sight of God. This condemned man is innocent!"

The crowd gave vent to their astonishment, and their loud exclamations were only exceeded by the terrified cries of the president and the clerk of the court.

"Yes, tremble, oh, ye judges!" continued the bishop, before the president had recovered his presence of mind; "tremble, for you were about to shed the blood of an innocent man."

Ordener was in consternation, lest his generous plan had been frustrated by the discovery of certain proofs against Schumacker.

"My lord bishop, if this criminal affair pass from hand to hand, it will escape us altogether," said the president. "Do not trust to appearances. If Ordener Guldenlew be innocent, who, then, is guilty?"

"I will soon make your grace acquainted with the fact," replied the bishop, pointing to an iron casket an attendant was carrying.

"Noble lords, in delivering your judgments you were utterly in the dark, but light will dawn when you have seen the contents of that casket."

Ordener, the president, and the clerk of the court all seemed equally struck with emotion at the sight of the mysterious box.

"Noble judges, hear me," continued his reverence. "On entering our palace this day, in order to rest from the fatigues of the night, and to pray for those condemned men, this sealed box was handed to us. The keeper of the Spladgest had left it at our palace with the injunction that it doubtless contained some Satanic mystery, as he found it on the dead body of that sacrilegious Benignus Spiagudry, whose corpse was brought in from Lake Sparbo."

Ordener listened with renewed attention. The audience maintained strict silence. The president and the clerk of the court looked like criminals. Their audacity and cunning had completely vanished. All power at times for sakes the wicked.

"We blessed the casket," pursued the bishop, "and broke the seal itself, stamped with the Griffenfeld arms. This box did, indeed, contain a diabolical secret, the purport of which you have now the opportunity of judging, honored lords. I must ask for your deepest attention, for it is a question of men's blood, and the Lord weighs every drop in the scale."

Opening the casket, he brought forth a parchment, bearing the following inscription:

"I, Blaxtham Cumbysulmum, doctor, now at the point of death, do intrust to Captain Dispolsen, of Copenhagen, agent to the former Count of Griffenfeld, the following document, written entirely by Turiaf Musdoemon, assistant to the chancellor, Count d'Ahlefeld. The said captain may make what use he pleases with the same. I pray God to pardon all my crimes.

"Written at Copenhagen, the 11th day of January, 1699.

"CUMBYSULMUM."

"The clerk of the court made an effort to speak, but he trembled so in every limb that he could not utter a syllable. The bishop handed the parchment to the pale and agitated president, who spread the document before him, and immediately exclaimed :

"What do I see here? 'Letter to the noble Count d'Ahlefeld, showing what means should be taken to rid himself legally of Schumacker.' I swear, reverend bishop——" and the parchment fell from the president's hands.

"Read on, my lord," pursued the bishop. "I doubt not your unworthy servant has made use of your name in the same way he did that of the unfortunate Schumacker. Only see what your unchristianlike hatred brought down on your disgraced predecessor. One of the courtiers plotted to ruin him in your name, hoping, doubtless, to find favor in your grace's eyes."

These words plainly proved to the president that the bishop knew the contents of the box, but evidently he did not suspect him. Ordener breathed more freely as he clearly saw that Schumacker's innocence and his own would be proved at the same time. He wondered at Dame Fortune's curious freaks, which impelled him to go in pursuit of this formidable brigand for the iron casket, when his guide had it in his own possession. In fact, he was running after the casket which was in reality following him. He pondered on the strangeness of events, and the fatal box that had led to his ruin was now to prove the means of saving him.

The president, having recovered himself, read a long letter, wherein Musdoemon detailed the abominable plot that he had so thoroughly carried out. Count d'Ahlefeld showed signs of the utmost indignation, in which the audience freely shared.

Several times the clerk rose to defend himself, but he was universally hooted, and when the document came to a close the people cried with horror.

"Halberdiers, seize that man!" exclaimed the president, indicating his private secretary, the clerk of the court.



The villain left his post of honor to take his seat on the bench of infamy, amidst the howls of the populace.

"Your lordships," said the bishop, "may tremble, and yet you have cause for rejoicing. The facts you have just heard can now be verified by our honored brother, Athanasius Munder, here present, the prison chaplain of this royal city."

At a sign from the president, Athanasius Munder rose, and, bowing to the bishop and the bench, said :

"What I am about to assert is strictly true. May Heaven punish me if I utter a word with any but the best intent. When I visited the viceroy's son this morning in his cell, I felt the young man was not guilty, although your lordships had convicted him on his own confession. A few hours ago I was called upon to administer the spiritual consolation to the unhappy mountaineer who was so cruelly assassinated before your eyes, and whom you had condemned, honored lords, as Han of Iceland. This is the confession he made to me : 'I am not Han of Iceland ; I have been well punished for taking the name. I was paid for being his substitute by Musdæmon, the clerk of the court of chancery, who supervised the whole of the insurrection, under the name of Hacket. He is the originator and sole cause of all.' The mountaineer asked me for my blessing, and implored me to repeat his words to the court. As God is my witness, this is nothing but the truth. May I be the means of saving the innocent, and punishing the guilty."

With this the priest ceased, and again bowed to the bishop and the judges.

"It is evident, my lord," said the bishop, "that one of my clients was not far from wrong when he distinguished the resemblance between Hacket and your clerk."

"Turiaf Musdæmon, what have you to say in your defense?" said the president.

Musdæmon looked at his master in a way which terrified him. After a moment's hesitation, he replied, with assurance :

"Nothing, my lord."

The president then continued, in a strained and faint voice :

"You plead guilty, then, to the crime with which you are charged? You are the author of a conspiracy both against the State and an individual named Schumacker?"

"Yes, my lord," answered Musdæmon.

"My lord president," said the bishop, rising, "that there

may be no doubt in this affair, will your grace ask the accused if he had any accomplices?"

"Accomplices!" repeated Musdœmon.

He reflected for a moment, during which time the president's countenance was terrible to witness.

"No, my lord bishop," at length was the reply.

The president looked toward him, evidently greatly relieved.

"No, I never had accomplices," continued Musdœmon more forcibly. "I was the inventor and promoter of the whole plot, instigated by one motive—my attachment to my master, by this means hoping to ruin his enemy, Schumacker. My master was ignorant of the conspiracy."

The president and the clerk again exchanged glances full of meaning.

"Your grace," said the bishop, "must now be aware that, as Musdœmon had no accomplices, Ordener Guldenlew cannot be guilty."

"Why did he plead guilty, reverend bishop, if he were not so?"

"My lord president, why did that mountaineer persist in calling himself Han of Iceland, even at the peril of his life? God alone knows the secret of every heart."

"Your lordship," said Ordener, addressing the court, "now that the real culprit is discovered, I may confess that I falsely accused myself, in order to save ex-Chancellor Schumacker's life, for by his death his daughter would have been left without a protector."

The president gnashed his teeth.

"We now call upon the court," said the bishop, "to proclaim our client Ordener's innocence."

The president signed in the affirmative.

The high syndic requested that the examination of the casket should be proceeded with. It was found to contain nothing except Schumacker's vouchers and title-deeds, some few letters of his to Captain Dispolsen, in which he expressed himself bitterly, but by no means in a culpable way likely to create alarm, unless it were to Count d'Ahlefeld.

While the crowd on the parade watched in anxious expectation, the executioner walked carelessly up and down the scaffold, awaiting the condemned man. The judges, meanwhile, were deliberating, but shortly came to a decision.

The president's voice was scarcely audible as he pronounced the judgment:

"Sentence of death on Turiaf Musdæmon. Ordener Guldenlew to be restored to his former position, with all its honors, titles, and privileges."

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

### GHASTLY TROPHIES.

The barracks of the Munckholm musketeers were situated in the heart of the fortress, surrounding a large square yard. According to custom, all doors were barricaded at night, and none of the soldiers were absent, except the sentinels on duty in the various towers, and those stationed in front of the military prison, which adjoined the barracks.

This prison, the safest and best guarded one in Munckholm, was chosen for the two condemned men, who were to be hanged in the morning—Han of Iceland and Musdæmon.

Han of Iceland is lying in chains on the ground of his cell, with his head resting on a stone. A faint glimmer shone through the iron grating in the oaken door, which separates his cell from his keeper's room, whence he could hear them swearing and laughing by turns, to the sound of empty bottles and the rattling of dice as they cast them on the drums.

The monster silently bit his chains, stretched forth his limbs in all directions, and finally called for his warder.

"What do you want?" said the jailer, coming to the grating.

"Companion," answered Han of Iceland, raising himself. "I am cold; my stone couch is hard and damp. Give me some straw to lie on, and a little fire to warm me."

"Well, it is only fair," said the jailer, "that a poor devil who is going to be hanged should have his comforts, even though it be the devil of Iceland himself. I will bring you what you want. Have you any money?"

"No," replied the brigand.

"Do you mean to tell me that you, the most famous robber in Norway, have not some wretched golden ducats in your money bag?"

"No."

"A few royal crowns, then?"

"No, I tell you."

"Not even some miserable ascalens?"

"No, no, I say. I could not even buy a rat's skin or a man's soul."

The jailor shrugged his shoulders.

"That is a very different matter," said he. "You ought not to complain.. Why, your cell is not half as cold as the one you will rest in to-morrow. You won't notice the hardness of your bed then."

Thus saying the jailor withdrew, followed by the monster's curses, who continued to roll his chains about with such violence, that some of the links gave way, thus reducing the rattling sound.

The oaken door was thrown open, and a tall man in red serge entered, carrying a dark lantern. He was accompanied by the warder, who had refused the prisoner's request. Han now remained perfectly quiet.

"Han of Iceland," said the man in red, "I am Nychol Orugix, the Drontheimhus executioner. To-morrow, at the break of day, I am to have the honor of hanging your excellency by the neck to a beautiful new gibbet, just erected in Drontheim square."

"Are you quite sure that you will hang me?" replied the brigand.

The executioner laughed.

"I wish you were as sure of Jacob's ladder to heaven as you are of Nychol Orugix's ladder up to the gibbet."

"Indeed!" said the monster, with a malicious look.

"Need I tell you again, master brigand, that I am executioner to the province?"

"If I were any man but what I am, I should wish to be you."

"I cannot return the compliment," said the hangman, highly flattered, and proudly rubbing his hands together. "You are right, my friend, ours is a noble profession. Ah, how well my hand can test the weight of a man's head."

"Have you ever drank blood?" asked the brigand.

"No but I have shed it pretty freely."

"Have you ever devoured a living infant?"

"No; but I have crushed human bones in the boot, wrenched limbs out of their sockets on the wheel, tortured the still breathing body with red-hot pincers, dried up the blood in the open veins by means of molten lead or boil-

ing oil, and I have notched steel saws on many of those whose skulls I have previously laid bare."

"Yes," said the brigand, with a sigh, "you also have your pleasures."

"Well, although you are Han of Iceland, I can say that I have caused more souls to take their flight than you have, and that without counting yours to-morrow."

"That is just supposing I have one. Now, executioner of the Drontheimhus, do you for one moment believe that you can separate Ingulphus' soul from Han of Iceland's body without forfeiting your own life?"

The executioner shouted with laughter.

"Indeed! Well, we shall see to-morrow."

"Yes, we shall see!" retorted the brigand.

"That is enough," continued the hangman. "I have not come here to talk about your soul, but about your body. Now listen to me. After death your body rightfully belongs to me, but the law gives you the privilege of selling it to me. Now, what do you want for it?"

"What do I want for my own corpse?"

"Yes; and don't be over-reaching."

Han of Iceland turned to the jailer, and said:

"Comrade, tell me what you charge for a bundle of straw and a little fuel?"

The jailer reflected for a moment, and then replied:

"Two golden ducats."

"Now, I'll tell you what you will have to do," said the brigand to the hangman; "you will have to pay me two golden ducats for my corpse."

"Two ducats, indeed!" cried the headsman. "What a ridiculous price. Just imagine—two whole golden ducats for a vile body. No, indeed, I'll not give you that sum."

"Then you won't have it," quietly answered the monster.

"Well, your corpse will be thrown into the common sewer, instead of forming an ornament to the Royal Museum at Copenhagen, or being placed among the curiosities at Berghen."

"What do you think I care?"

"Why, long after your death people will flock to see your skeleton, exclaiming: 'There are the remains of the famous Han of Iceland.' Your bones will be carefully polished, and kept together with brass pins. You will be put under a glass case, which will be dusted every day. Instead of such honors as these, think of the fate which awaits you if you refuse to sell me your corpse. You will



be left to decay in some charnel-house, to furnish food for worms and vultures."

"Well, then, I shall only resemble the living, who are worried by lesser creatures, and become the prey of larger ones."

"Two golden ducats!" muttered the executioner, viciously; "what exorbitant terms! My dear Han of Iceland, if you do not lower your price, we cannot do business together."

"This is the first sale, and probably the last, I shall effect in my life, so I am naturally anxious to make a good bargain."

"Remember, I can soon make you repent your obstinacy. To-morrow you will be entirely in my power."

"And so you think?" replied the monster, in a significant tone, which passed unnoticed by the executioner, who continued:

"Yes; there is a certain way of fixing the slip-knot. There, if you will only be reasonable, I will hang you in a better fashion."

"I care but little how you may twist my neck to-morrow," retorted the monster, jeeringly.

"Now, won't you be satisfied with two royal crowns? What is the use of them to you?"

"Ask your comrade there," said the brigand, pointing to the jailer. "He wants two golden ducats for a bundle of straw and a little fuel."

"By St. Joseph's saw!" cried the executioner, furiously, "it is awful to ask two ducats for some paltry firing and some vile straw. Why, it is really its weight in gold. Two ducats, indeed!"

"I ought to be praised for not asking four," returned the jailer. "It is all very well for you to talk, Master Nychol, but you are a regular screw. Fancy refusing a poor prisoner two golden ducats for his corpse, when you will sell it for twenty ducats, at least, to some scholar or to a doctor."

"I never pay more than fifteen ascalens."

"Yes, that may be, for the body of a paltry thief, or a wretched Jew; but every one knows that you can demand any price for Han of Iceland's body."

Han of Iceland shrugged his shoulders.

"What business is it of yours?" said Orugix, roughly. "Do I interfere with your pilferings, when you rob the prisoners of their clothes and jewels, and mix dirty water with their weak soup? Do I say a word when you torture

them to extract money? No, I will not pay two golden ducats."

"No straw and no fuel for less than two golden ducats," replied the jailer, obstinately.

"No dead body of mine for less than two golden ducats," calmly added the brigand.

After a moment's silence, the executioner, with a stamp of the foot, exclaimed :

"I must be off ; time flies, and I am wanted elsewhere ;" and bringing out a leather pouch, he carefully opened it.

"There, you cursed demon of Iceland," said he, reluctantly drawing out the money, "take your two ducats. Satan won't give as much for your soul as I am paying for your body."

The brigand seized the golden pieces, which the jailer tried to grasp.

"Not quite so fast, companion ; first hand me what I bargained for."

The jailer went out, and soon returned with a bundle of fresh straw and a caldron full of burning coal, which he placed near the condemned man.

"I am satisfied," said the brigand, throwing him the two ducats. "Now I shall be able to warm myself. By the by, is not my cell close to the Munckholm musketeers' barracks?"

"Yes, you are right."

"What quarter is the wind in?"

"In the east, I think."

"That will do," said the brigand.

"What are you driving at, comrade?" asked the jailer

"Nothing at all."

"Farewell, comrade, till early to-morrow morning."

"Yes, till to-morrow," replied the brigand.

The noise of the heavy closing door prevented the executioner and his companion from hearing the wild laughter which followed these mocking words.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### BROTHERLY LOVE.

Let us now take a glance at the other cell adjoining the musketeers' barracks, where Turiaf Musdoemon was imprisoned.

It seems astonishing that Musdoemon, so replete with cunning and artifice, should readily confess his crime

before the court in which he had been condemned, and should so generously withhold the part his ungrateful master, Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, had taken throughout. One thing was certain—Muscœmon was in no way changed. This seeming generosity was only a further proof of his wonderful ability. When he knew that his infernal machinations were discovered, he was completely dumfounded; but this feeling soon passed off. He plainly perceived that, as he had no chance of ruining his former victims, he must take the best means of saving himself. He saw but two ways of doing so—either to cast the whole blame on Count d'Ahlefeld for his share in the crime, or to take all the consequences on his own shoulders. An ordinary person would have decided on the first course, but Muscœmon chose the second. The chancellor was in office, and there was nothing really compromising in the documents. It was otherwise with the clerk. The proofs against him were overwhelming. The looks which the latter had exchanged with the president also helped to determine him, and he felt assured Count d'Ahlefeld would effect his escape; not from gratitude for past assistance, but in hopes of future services. He paced his dimly lighted cell, fully convinced that he would be set free that night. He examined this old stone dungeon, which had been constructed in the days of some of the ancient monarchs, whose names were lost to history. The culprit was astonished to find himself on a wooden flooring, that echoed every step, as though it were placed over some cavity. He noticed a large iron ring in the arched roof, from which an old piece of rope was dangling. As time passed, he listened impatiently to the tower clock striking the different hours, which echoed dismally through the weary watches of the night.

At length he heard footsteps approaching, and his face beamed with hope as he saw the door of his cell open.

The same individual in scarlet we left with Han, now entered with a coil of rope in his hand. He was followed by four halberdiers, in black uniform, and fully armed.

Muscœmon was still in his legal wig and gown, which evidently had an imposing effect on the man in red, who immediately bowed respectfully, according to custom.

"My lord," said he, hesitatingly to the prisoner; "is it with your worship that we have to do business?"

"Yes, yes," replied Muscœmon, hoping this polite address was the prelude to his release, for he had not perceived the style of his visitor's costume.

The man fixed his eyes on the open parchment before him, and continued :

"Is your name Turiaf Musdœmon?"

"Yes, certainly ; you have been sent by the grand chancellor?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Do not fail to express my gratitude to his grace, after you have carried out your orders."

The man in red looked astonished.

"Your—gratitude!"

"Yes, my friends ; as I probably cannot do so myself for some time to come."

"Most probably!" echoed the man, ironically.

"And you quite understand," pursued Musdœmon, "that I must not show myself ungrateful for so great a service."

"By the cross of the penitent thief," cried the other, with a horse laugh, "to hear your worship, any one would think that the chancellor was bestowing a real favor on you."

"No doubt about it. After all, he is only rendering me strict justice."

"Strict justice may be. You do then allow that it is strict justice? This is the first time during the twenty years I have been in office that I have heard such an avowal. Now, my lord, all these words are but a waste of time. Are you ready?"

"Quite," said Musdœmon joyfully, making his way to the door.

"Come, come, not so fast," said the man in red, dropping his coil of rope.

"What is all that rope for?" asked Musdœmon.

"Your worship has every reason to put that question. I have certainly too much rope by half. At the trial I thought I should have more criminals to pass through my hands," answered the man, uncoiling his rope.

"Now, let us hasten," said Musdœmon.

"Your worship is in a great hurry ; would you not like to say a prayer or two?"

"No ; only the one I have already said to you—tender my best thanks to his grace. For God's sake, do not linger here," added Musdœmon. "I am anxious to leave. Have we very far to go?"

"Far to go?" repeated the man in red, taking his measurement of the rope. "The length of the route cannot greatly fatigue your worship, as it ends here."

"What do you mean?" inquired Musdœmon, with a shudder.

"What do you mean?" returned the other.

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed the horror-stricken Musdœmon, now dimly aware of the truth. "Who are you?"

"I am the hangman."

The poor wretch trembled like a parched leaf in the wind.

"Have you not come to further my escape?" murmured he, almost inaudibly.

The hangman shouted with laughter.

"Yes, I have come to help you to the spirit land, whence no one, I vow, will ever call for you."

"Mercy! mercy! pray have pity on me!" cried Musdœmon, throwing himself on the ground.

"By my faith, this is the first time such a request has been made on me. Do you take me for the king?"

The miserable man, who was lately so joyful, crawled in the dust, rolled his head from side to side, and amidst his tears and sobs he kissed the hangman's feet.

"That's enough," said the man, with a kick. "I never yet saw the black gown humble itself before my red blouse. Now, comrade, pray God and the saints for help; they will pay more heed to you than I shall."

Musdœmon remained kneeling, with his head buried in his hands, crying bitterly.

By stretching himself, the hangman had succeeded in running the rope through the ring under the arch. He gave it a double twist, to make it firm, and prepared a slip-knot at the other end.

When these horrible preparations were complete, he said to the condemned man:

"I have finished; have you also ended with life?"

"No," answered Musdœmon, rising; "this must be some terrible mistake, for Chancellor d'Ahlefeld cannot be so vile. Besides, I am essential to him. It is impossible you have been sent to execute me. Further my escape, or fear the chancellor's anger."

"Did you say that you were Turiaf Musdœmon?" asked the hangman.

The prisoner, after a moment's hesitation, said:

"No, my name is not Musdœmon, but Turiaf Orugix."

"Orugix!" exclaimed the hangman. "Did you say Orugix?" and pulling the man's wig off, he cried, in amazement:

"My brother!"



"Your brother!" repeated the prisoner joyfully, though a little shame was apparent in the avowal; "are you——"

"Nychol Orugix, executioner of the Drontheimhus, at your service, brother Turiaf."

The condemned man threw his arms round the executioner's neck, calling him "his brother, his dear brother!" A witness would in no way have been affected by this show of brotherly affection, for Turiaf's method of pleasing was evidently only for the occasion, and fear had much to do with the smiles he lavished on his brother. Nychol looked gloomy and embarrassed.

The scene reminded one of a tiger fawning on an elephant, when the monster's heavy foot weighs on its body and is about to crush him.

"This is fortunate, brother Nychol. I am delighted to see you again."

"And I am sorry for you, brother Turiaf."

The prisoner pretended not to hear, and continued, in a trembling voice:

"You have doubtless a wife and children. You must take me to see my charming sister, and let me embrace my dear nephews."

"By Satan's cross!" muttered the hangman.

"I will be a second father to them. Brother, listen to me. I am in a high position; I have influence——"

The brother answered in a marked manner:

"I know you had. At present you need only think of the influence you have no doubt managed to secure for yourself with the saints."

The condemned man now gave up all hope.

"Great Heaven! what can you mean, dear Nychol? Surely, now that I have found you, I am saved? You and I are sons of the same mother. We shared games in childhood; and remember, Nychol, you are my brother."

"You never remembered it until now," retorted Nychol, savagely.

"No, but it is not possible that I should die by my brother's hand."

"Well, it's your own fault, Turiaf. You stopped my career, and prevented me from being royal executioner at Copenhagen, so here I am in this wretched province. If you had not acted as a bad brother, you would not have had to complain of my conduct, which now so disgusts you. I should not have been in the Drontheimhus, and another would have done service for you. Brother, we have said quite enough about it, and you must die."

Death to the wicked is fearful to contemplate, while to the good it seems but rest. Both must leave this mortal coil. The just man views it as a release from his prison-house; while to the wicked it appears like being dragged from a fortress. Hell reveals itself to the perverted soul, which had thought to end in nothingness; and when the spirit stays for a moment at death's door, it finds that its hopes of a void have fled.

The prisoner writhed on the floor, tossed his arms wildly about, and gave the most heart-rending cries, more fearful to hear than the eternal lament of the condemned soul.

"Merciful God! saints of heaven! if such there be, have pity on me. Nychol, my Nychol, in the name of our mother, oh, pray, let me live."

The hangman showed his official mandate.

"I cannot; the order is precise."

"This document cannot concern me," stammered the despairing prisoner. "It relates to a certain Musdæmon, and I am Turiaf Orugix."

"You are making game of me," said Nychol, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Why, I know it means you. Besides," he added, harshly, "yesterday you would not have owned to your brother that you were Turiaf Orugix, and to-day you are only Turiaf Musdæmon to him."

"Brother! my brother!" pursued the wretched man, "well, then, just wait till to-morrow. It is impossible the grand chancellor can have sent my death-warrant. It is some fearful mistake. Count d'Ahlefeld has real affection for me. Spare my life, I implore you, my dear Nychol. I shall soon regain my former influence, and I will amply requite you for this service."

"You can only render me one, Turiaf," interrupted the hangman. "I have already lost two executions, on which I firmly relied—that of ex-Chancellor Schumacker and the viceroy's son. I am so unfortunate. The only two now remaining are those of the demon and yourself. As your execution is to be conducted in secret at night, it will bring me in twelve golden ducats. The only favor I expect from you is to let me finish all quietly."

"Oh, God!" cried the condemned man, in his agony.

"This is really the first concession, and it shall be the last I shall ever require from you. In return, I promise that you shall not suffer much. I will hang you in all brotherly feeling; so resign yourself."

Musdæmon rose. His lips were blue, and trembling

with anger, his teeth chattered, and he foamed at the mouth.

"By all the powers of Satan! to think I should have saved this D'Ahlefeld, and embraced my brother, and in return they would kill me. I am then to die at night in this dark, lonesome cell, without making my curses resound from one end of the kingdom to the other. And must I leave all their crimes unmasked? Was it for such a death as this that I sullied the whole of my life? Wretch" said he, turning to his brother, "would you be a fratricide?"

"I am executioner," coolly replied Nychol.

"No, I will not die such a death as this," continued he, with flaming eyes, throwing himself with fury on the hangman, like an enraged bull at bay. "I have not lived like the dreaded serpent that I should now be crushed like a worm. I die, but the last sting shall be deadly."

Thus speaking, he grasped in enmity the one he had so lately embraced as a brother.

The fawning and affectionate Musdœmon showed himself in his true colors. He felt the very depths of despair, and after crawling along as a tiger, he rose with all the fury of that wild beast. While the brothers were thus struggling, it would have been difficult to determine which was the most frightful to witness—he who fought with all the blind ferocity of a savage animal, or the other, who battled with all the cunning fury of a devil. The four halberdiers soon interfered, and Musdœmon was compelled to give way. He threw himself against the stones with smothered cries, and dug his nails in the plaster.

"Am I to die, you devils of perdition? Die! without my cries resounding through these vaults, and all my efforts to be released from these walls prove in vain?"

He was seized, and offered no resistance; he was utterly exhausted by his useless struggle. In order to pinion him, his gown had to be taken off, and a sealed packet fell to the ground.

"How could I have forgotten that?" muttered he, with a fiendish expression gleaming in his haggard eyes. "Listen to me, brother Nychol," said he, in a friendly tone, "those papers belong to the grand chancellor. Promise to deliver them to him, and then do what you like with me."

"Now that you are quiet again, I promise to carry out your last wishes, although you have certainly acted in a most unbrotherly way toward me. On Orugix's honor, those papers shall be delivered to the chancellor."

"Hand them to him yourself," said the condemned man, with a strange smile, which the hangman did not understand, as smiles were not much in his way. "The pleasure they will cause his grace may lead to your future advancement."

"Indeed, brother!" said Orugix. "Thank you. Perhaps I may be named royal executioner. What say you? Well, let us part friends. I forgive you the wounds you inflicted on me with your nails, and you forgive me the rope collar I am about to place on you."

"The chancellor promised me another kind of collar," replied Musdœmon.

The halberdiers led him, completely pinioned, to the center of the cell; the hangman passed the fatal noose round his neck.

"Turiaf, are you ready?"

"One minute, just a minute more," implored the condemned man, whose fears had returned with double force. "Have mercy, brother, pray; do not pull the rope until I tell you."

"There is no necessity for me to pull the rope," replied Orugix.

After a minute's silence, he repeated the question:

"Are you ready?"

"Only another minute. Alas! must I then die?"

"Turiaf, I have no time for waiting."

While thus speaking he motioned to the halberdiers to draw back.

"Just a word more, brother. Do not fail to deliver that packet to Count d'Ahlefeld."

"Be quite easy on that score," replied his brother; and then for the third time he repeated the question:

"Now, are you ready?"

The miserable wretch was again about to speak, doubtless to implore a moment's reprieve, when the impatient hangman stooped and pressed a brass button which was fixed in the floor. The planks fell asunder, and the unfortunate man fell into a square trap beneath, amid the vibrations of the rope so suddenly weighed down, which swayed with the convulsions of the dying man.

Nothing but the rope was visible without the gloomy

pit, from which the sounds of running water could be clearly heard, and a strong wind blowing.

The halberdiers themselves drew back, horror-stricken.

The hangman steadied the cord, let himself down, and rested his feet on the victim's shoulders. The fatal rope, thus stretched, gave a hoarse twang, a smothered sigh issued from the trap, then all was still.

"That's finished," said the hangman, reappearing in the cell. "Farewell, brother."

Taking a long knife from his belt, he added :

"Go, feed the fish in the gulf. Let your body sink into the water as surely as your soul will be consumed by fire."

Thus saying he cut the rope. What remained attached to the ring flew back to the roof. A sudden splash was heard as the body fell into the water, which bore its burden away to the gulf.

When the hangman had closed the trap, he perceived that the cell was full of smoke.

"What is the meaning of all this smoke?" inquired he.

The halberdiers were equally astonished with himself, and hastened to open the door. All the corridors were filled with a heavy, stifling cloud. In great alarm they made their way through a secret passage to the courtyard, where a fearful sight met their eyes.

The whole of the military prison and the barracks of the musketeers were in flames. They, accelerated by the east wind, burst through the roof and the windows, and rushed round the walls. The dark towers of Munckholm stood out in relief in the midst of the lurid light, shortly to be lost to view in the thick clouds of smoke. A turnkey who fled across the yard, just stayed to tell them that while Han of Iceland's keepers slept, the monster's cell caught fire, as they had imprudently given him straw and fuel.

"I am most unfortunate," cried Orugix. "Now, most likely, Han will escape me. The rogue has been burnt; and I shall not even have his body, for which I have already paid two ducats."

The wretched musketeers, suddenly awakened to their deadly peril, rushed in crowds to the heavy portal so firmly barricaded. Their cries of anguish and distress could be heard from within. Some were at the burning windows, wringing their hands, others threw themselves into the yard, resolved to meet one death rather than face



the other. The whole edifice was in flames before the rest of the garrison could arrive. All help was vain. Fortunately the building was isolated. When they at length succeeded in bursting open the massive door, all was over. At that very moment, the roof came down with a crash on the unfortunate soldiers, bringing down in its fall the whole of the burning building.

Nothing could be seen, but from the midst of the fierce flames some faint moans could still be heard.

On the morrow, the blackened fragments of the walls alone were distinct around the smoldering ashes. When search was made, calcined bones and disfigured, lifeless bodies were found among the ruins. Only thirty soldiers remained alive, and they were mostly injured, of the fine Munckholm regiment. On going to Han's cell, whence the fatal disaster had proceeded, near the fire the remains of a body were found, resting on some broken chains. In the midst of the embers two skulls were found, but only one corpse.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

### STRICT JUSTICE.

Count d'Ahlefeld, looking pale and haggard, was pacing up and down his room. In his clenched hands were some letters, which he crumpled with rage. Nychol, still in his scarlet dress, stood respectfully, with cap in hand, waiting to be noticed.

"You have, indeed, rendered me a service, Musdœmon," muttered the chancellor between his teeth.

The executioner, who was staring stupidly before him, ventured to say :

"Your grace is then pleased?"

"Fellow, what do you want here?" said the count, roughly.

The hangman, proud to have at length attracted the chancellor's attention, beamed with hope, as he hastened to reply :

"What I should like, your grace, is the post of executioner at Copenhagen : if your grace will deign to confer this great honor upon me, in consideration of the good news with which I was favored in being the bearer of."

The chancellor called the two halberdiers on duty at the door.

'Seize that scoundrel! He has had the insolence to set at defiance.'

As the guards dragged the dismayed Nychol off, he tried to say a few more words.

"My lord——"

"From this moment you cease to be executioner of the Drontheimhus; I cancel your appointment," exclaimed the chancellor, slamming the door.

Count d'Ahlefeld read and re-read these letters from the Countess to Musdœmon, sure proofs of Elphege's dishonor, as they were in her own handwriting. He is now fully aware that Ulrica is not his daughter, and the still lamented Frederic was perhaps likewise not his son.

With the unhappy count pride had brought its own punishment—this failing had been the mainspring of all his crimes.

It was no small matter to see his plans of vengeance entirely frustrated; but nothing compared to the knowledge that his dreams of ambition could never be realized—his past dishonored, his future a total blank. In vain trying to ruin his enemies he has only succeeded in losing his own reputation, his chief adviser, and even his rights as husband and father. He resolves to see once more the wretched creature who had deceived him.

He passed through the spacious rooms with rapid steps, shaking the letters with fury, until he arrived at Elphege's door. In his rage he threw it violently open. His guilty wife had suddenly heard the news of her son Frederic's horrible death from Colonel Vœthaun. The unfortunate mother was mad.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

"THOUGH LOST TO SIGHT, TO MEMORY DEAR."

The late events formed the sole topic of conversation throughout the Drontheimhus during the next fortnight.

The crowd collected in town, who had vainly waited in hopes of witnessing seven executions, now began to despair of having the pleasure.

Old women, half blind, averred that on the night of the incendiarism they had seen Han of Iceland fly away in a flame, laughing in the midst of the fire, as he hurled the burning roof on the Munckholm musketeers.

After a short absence, which to Ethel seemed ages, Ordener returned to the Lion of Sleswig Tower, accompanied by General Levin de Knud and the chaplain, Athanasius Munder.

Schumacker was in the garden, leaning on his daughter's arm. The newly married couple had to content themselves with exchanging a loving look. Schumacker pressed the young man's hand affectionately, and bowed cordially to the two strangers.

"Young friend," said the old captive, "may Heaven bless your return."

"My lord," replied Ordener, "I have just left my father at Berghen, and I have come to embrace my father at Drontheim."

"What can you mean?" inquired his astonished hearer.

"Will you give me your daughter, my noble lord?"

"My daughter!" exclaimed the prisoner, turning toward the flushed and trembling Ethel.

"Yes, my lord. I love your Ethel; I will devote my whole life to her; for she is truly mine."

"My son, you are most noble and worthy; and though your father injured me, I freely forgive him for your sake. I would gladly sanction this union, if it were not for one great obstacle."

"What is that?" said Ordener anxiously.

"You love my daughter; but are you really sure she loves you?"

The lovers gave each other a surprised glance.

"Yes," continued Schumacker, "I regret that it should be so, as I am attached to you, and nothing would please me more than to know you were my son. But my daughter will not consent. Since your departure she recently expressed her aversion to you, and when I ever mentioned your name, she tried in every way to turn the conversation, as though the subject were distasteful to her. Ordener, give up this idea.. Believe me, love has its curse as well as hatred."

"My lord!" exclaimed Ordener, completely thunderstruck.

"Father," said Ethel, imploringly, with clasped hands.

"My child, do not distress yourself," interposed the old man. "I approve of this marriage, but the idea seems displeasing to you. I will not wound your feelings, Ethel; a great change has come over me during the last fortnight. I will not attempt to overcome your

repugnance for Ordener. You are at liberty to act as you think fit."

Athanasius Munder smilingly replied :

"She is not free to do so."

"You are mistaken, dear father," said Ethel, firmly. "I do not hate Ordener."

"What is the meaning of this?" said Schumacker.

"I am——" replied Ethel, and she could say no more.

"Ethel is my wife," said Ordener, kneeling before the old man. "Father, forgive me, as my own father has already done, and bestow your blessing on us, your children."

The bewildered Schumacker hastened to comply, and blessed the young couple bending down before him.

"I have cursed so many in my life, that I am anxious to give my blessing to all. Pray now explain yourselves."

This was readily done, and his tears flowed from love and gratitude.

"I thought myself clear sighted. I am old, and I cannot understand the workings of a young girl's heart."

"I am now to be called Ethel Guldenlew?" said his daughter, with childish delight.

"Ordener Guldenlew," continued Schumacker, "you are a far better man than I ever was, for in the time of my prosperity I would never have condescended to unite myself to the daughter of a degraded and miserable outlaw."

The general shook the prisoner's hand, and gave him a roll of parchment, saying :

"My lord count, do not continue in this strain. Here are your title-deeds, which the king had already forwarded to you by Captain Dispolsen. As a dowry to your daughter, the Countess of Danneskiold, his majesty has been pleased to grant you pardon and liberty."

"Pardon ! liberty !" repeated the delighted Ethel.

"Countess of Danneskiold !" exclaimed the father.

"Yes, count," said the general. "All your titles have been restored to you, and you take possession of the whole of your property."

"To whom am I indebted for this complete restitution?" asked the happy father.

"To General Levin de Knud," replied Ordener.

"Levin de Knud. Then I was not mistaken when I told you that General and Governor Levin de Knud was the best of men. Why did he not come himself and tell me these happy tidings? Where is he now?"

"There he stands," said Ordener, indicating the general, who was totally overcome with joy.

It was a touching scene to witness the meeting of these two old men, who had been friends in youth and greatness. Schumacker gave vent to his feelings. He had ceased to hate mankind since he became acquainted with Han of Iceland. Ordener and Levin had taught him how to care for men.

Grand *fetes* were held in honor of the gloomy union consecrated in a cell. Life in all its gladness now dawned on the young couple, who had so freely hailed death with a smile. Count d'Ahlefeld remained to see their complete happiness. This was his greatest punishment. Athanasius Munder had his reward—he obtained pardon for the fourteen criminals. Ordener secured the same grace for his old companions in misfortune—Kennybol, Jonas, and Norbith—who, when once set free, returned to the peaceful miners to announce the joyful tidings—that the king had freed them from the hateful tax.

Schumacker did not live long after Ordener and Ethel's union. Liberty and happiness had proved too much for his enfeebled strength. He soon exchanged them for the joy and freedom of another world. He died in the same year, 1699, to the intense grief of his sorrowing children, who realized that perfect happiness is not to be found on this earth.

The old count was buried in Veer Church, in Jutland, on land belonging to his son-in-law. The tomb was fully inscribed with the titles of which he had been deprived during his captivity.

The future counts of Danneskiold trace their ancestry to the union between Ordener Guldenlew and Ethel Schumacker.

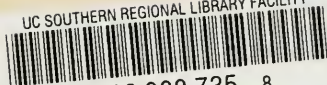
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